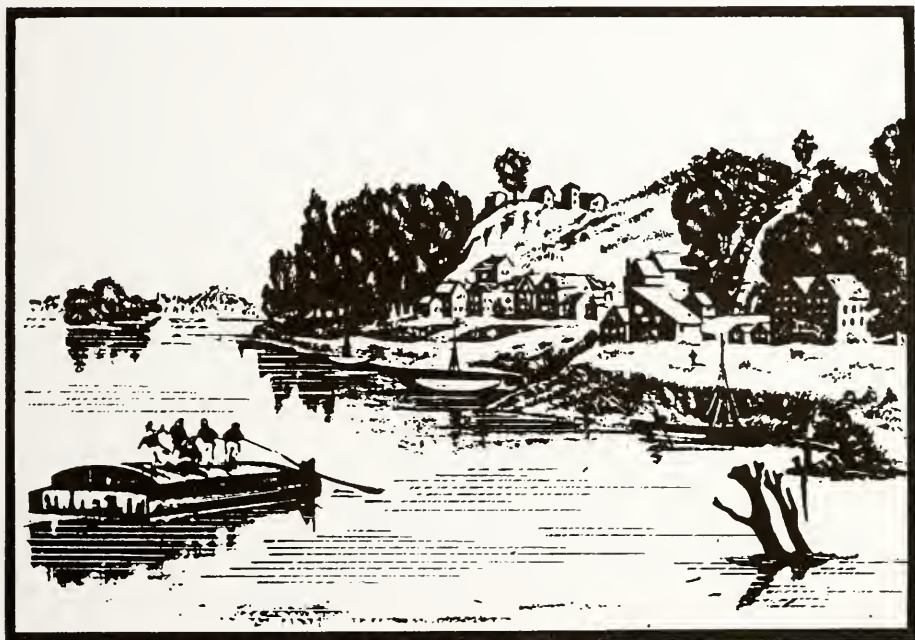


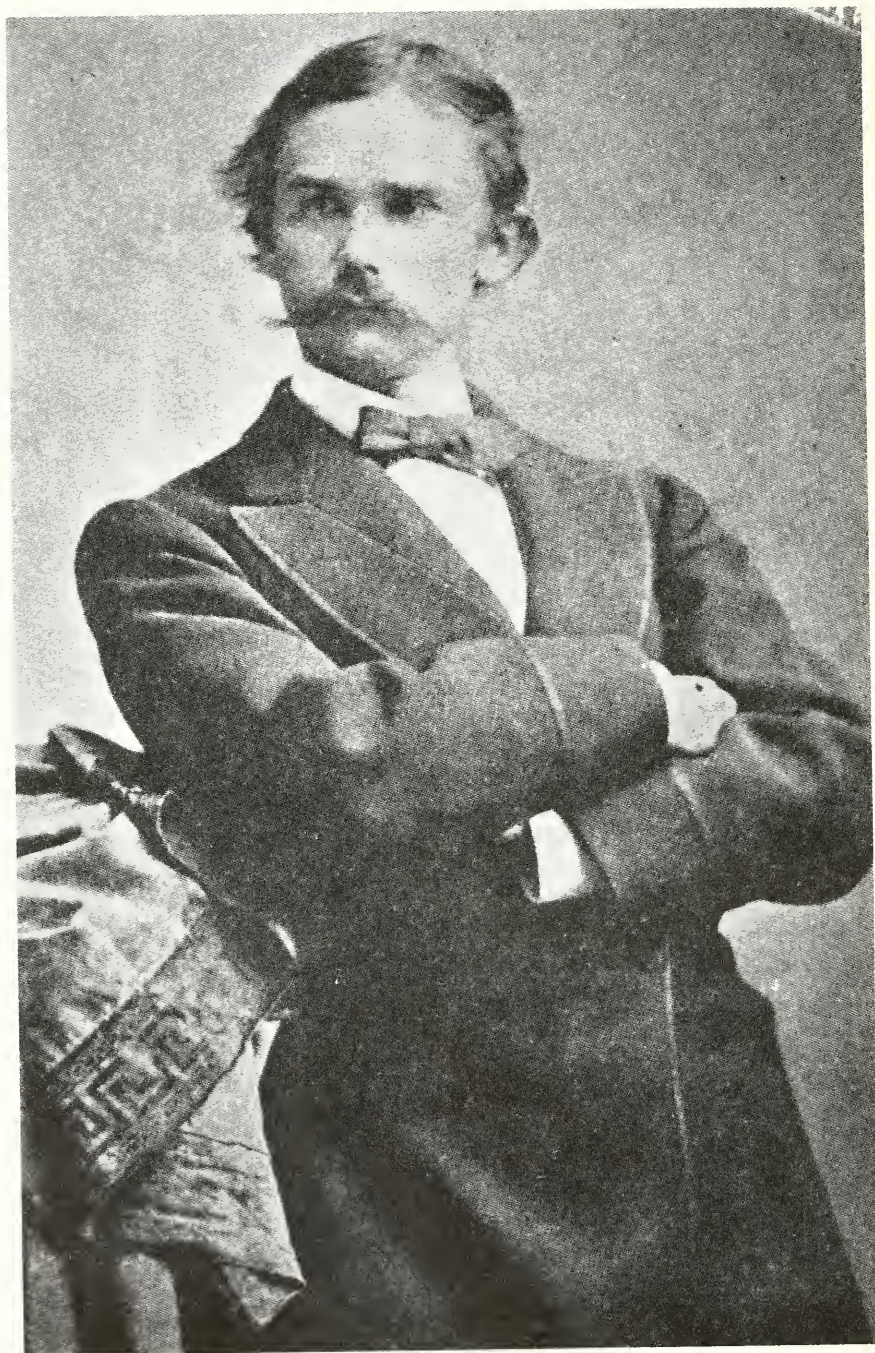
JOHN HAY'S PIKE COUNTY



TWO TALES & SEVEN BALLADS

Edited with an Introduction
by George Monteiro

John Hay's Pike County



John Milton Hay (1874)

John Hay's Pike County Two Tales and Seven Ballads

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**Western Illinois Monograph Series, Number 3
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To David H. Hirsch

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Introduction

John Hay's Life and Career

John Hay died in high office. He was at the time, as he had been since 1898, U.S. secretary of state. As Henry Adams declared in *The Education of Henry Adams*, Hay "had solved nearly every old problem of American statesmanship. . . . For the first time in fifteen hundred years a true Roman pax was in sight, and would, if it succeeded, owe its virtues to him."¹ Under presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, Hay had become one of the nation's great heroes. But John Hay had also been a poet and historian of considerable fame. As William Dean Howells wrote in the *North American Review* in the year of Hay's death, "He lived to be recognized as the ablest public man of his time, the inventor of a diplomacy that was sincere, courageous and generous, and it has seemed to me, in reviewing what he wrote, that he might have had an equal and a kindred fame in literature."² At some point Hay had made a choice of public service over literature. And yet, although he had, intermittently at first and then predominantly, chosen the political life of a public servant, in 1904 Hay's literary fame was handsome enough to have him numbered among the very first seven individuals elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters; and although Howells also numbered among the first seven, Henry James and Henry Adams did not.

John Milton Hay was born on 8 October 1838 in Salem, Indiana, the fourth child of Dr. Charles Hay and Helen Leonard Hay, who were transplanted New Englanders. Three years later the Hay family, which ultimately included six children, moved to Spunky Point, later called Warsaw, Illinois. Hay was educated in Pittsfield, Illinois, at a private classical school, and from 1852 until 1855, he attended college at Springfield, Illinois. In September of 1855, Hay went east, to matriculate at Brown University with advanced standing as a member of the sophomore class. During his stay at Brown (considered the class poet, he graduated in June of 1858), he distinguished himself as much for his poetry as for his studies, meeting in the course of those years, the poet Sarah Helen Whitman, once Edgar Allan Poe's fiancée. He formed closer friendships with Nora Perry and Hannah Angell, to both of whom he addressed his poet's letters from Warsaw after his departure from Providence. In a letter to Nora Perry, the young poet wrote in October of 1858: "In spite of the praise which you continuously lavish upon the West, I must respectfully assert that I find only a dreary waste of heartless materialism, where great and heroic qualities may indeed bully their way up into the glare, but the flowers of existence invariably droop and wither. So in time I shall change. I shall turn from 'the rose and the rainbow' to corner-lots and tax-titles, and a few years will find my eye not rolling in a fine frenzy, but

steadily fixed on the pole-star of humanity. \$!''³

After some floundering, Hay finally decided to read law in his uncle Milton Hay's office in Springfield, Illinois, where he met John G. Nicolay, who was a clerk in the Illinois secretary of state's office. He also became acquainted with the partners in the law firm of Abraham Lincoln and William Herndon, located next door to his uncle's office. In 1860 when Abraham Lincoln won the Republican nomination and sought the presidency, Hay campaigned for him both in person and through reports to the *Providence Journal* and the *Missouri Democrat*. Upon Lincoln's election, he and Nicolay were rewarded with appointments as White House secretaries to the president himself. During his four years in the White House Hay dispatched his duties with competence, spirit, and intelligence. Despite the pressing duties of assisting a president who was conducting a major civil war, Hay found time to write and have published poetry, essays, and at least one patriotic story, "Red, White, and Blue," dealing with the duties of those who would be faithful and responsible to the Union. It was published, fittingly, amid engravings of war scenes and national heroes in *Harper's Weekly* in 1861. Early in 1865, with the end of the war imminent, Hay made plans to change careers. Sporting the recently acquired rank of colonel (by which he would be known, off and on, for the rest of his life), Hay secured a consular post in Europe, serving over the next five years initially as first secretary of the United States legation in Paris (1865-67), then as charge d'affaires at Vienna (1867-68), and finally as secretary of the legation at Madrid (1868-70). During this period he continued to write for American journals. He prepared essays on topics for the American interested in Europe (such as "Down the Danube") and for an America reaching back into the nexus of parochial and national history ("The Mormon Prophet's Tragedy"). He wrote stories drawing upon his Parisian experiences (such as "Shelby Cabell" and "Kane and Abel") as well as on regional boyhood experiences ("The Foster-Brothers" and "The Blood Seedling"). In the stories set in Paris, Hay emphasizes the early international notion that grave dangers await innocent and not-so-innocent Americans trying to make their way in Paris, while in the midwestern stories he concerns himself, respectively, with the bitter wages of love and miscegenation and with the murderous proclivities in the heart of the midwestern farmer (the dark side of the Pike County Golyers in his humorous poems). While still a member of the legation at Madrid, he began to write essays about his experiences there that, after his return to the United States in 1870, would become part of *Castilian Days* (1871), which brought him considerable acclaim.

Calling an end to his consular career in 1870, he decided to accept an offer to write editorials on a daily basis for the *New York Tribune*. In the years he spent with the *Tribune*, he earned the highest praise from the newspaper's senior editor, Horace Greeley, who once called Hay "The best newspaper writer in the United States."⁴ Within months of joining the *Tribune*, however, Hay had achieved another kind of fame. In the pages of the *Tribune* were published the first of his regional poems, "Little Breeches" (19 November 1870) and "Jim Bludso (of the

Prairie Belle)" (5 January 1871). The poems caught on and, like wildfire, spread across the newspapers and journals of the nation.

Dealing with "Western" subjects and adopting the regional dialect of Pike County, the success of these poems encouraged the writing of others, "Banty Tim" and "The Mystery of Gilgal." Their success also made it possible for Hay to establish himself as a poet with the publication of *Pike County Ballads and Other Pieces* (1871), including sixteen pages of the ballads and 137 pages of the other kinds of poetry Hay had been writing since his university days.

On 4 February 1874, he married Clara Louise Stone, the daughter of the wealthy Amasa Stone of Cleveland, Ohio. In less than seventeen months, Hay had resigned from the *Tribune* and removed himself to Cleveland to participate in Amasa Stone's financial affairs. He also assumed an active role in Ohio politics, a role that in 1879 resulted in his appointment as assistant secretary of state by President Rutherford B. Hayes. He served until March of 1881, when he agreed to return to New York to edit the *Tribune* for six months while his friend Whitelaw Reid honeymooned in Europe.

Hay's public literary career between the end of his duty with the *Tribune* in 1875 and his return to the paper in 1881 was hardly auspicious. In 1881-82, however, he wrote anonymous reviews of novels for the *Tribune* (only one, of Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, has been identified) and of several books relating to the Union generals in the Civil War. The latter reviews lead us to Hay's major literary work of this period and of the next decade as well—his researching and writing of the monumental *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, done in collaboration with his friend and former fellow worker in the White House, John G. Nicolay. Announced intermittently over more than a decade, *Abraham Lincoln* was serialized by the *Century* (which paid the authors \$50,000) over the period from November 1886 until February 1890, before appearing in ten volumes in 1890.

But his work on Lincoln was not Hay's only literary work in the 1880s. In August of 1883 appeared the first installment of *The Bread-winners*, a novel that was published anonymously in the *Century* through January of 1884 before appearing as a book later that year. An early antilabor novel reflecting the establishment's alarm over the growing threats to the social, political, and economic status quo exemplified in the violent strikes of 1877 and their fallout, *The Bread-winners* is a serious, intelligent work marked by a sprightly, engaging style.

If for no other reason, the book deserves to be read for its portrait of Maud Matchin, the self-made high-school graduate who brazenly challenges her betters. She represented a new type of woman, and John Hay was the first to depict that type in a novel. Something of the author's attitude toward such social self-starters, though, is revealed in his not-so-jocular motto, "Love your neighbor, but be careful of your neighborhood."⁵

The Bread-winners also includes something of a self-portrait in the character Arthur Farnham, who presents John Hay's own sense of himself as a member of beleaguered society. Like Farnham, when things public began to upset Hay, he would take himself off to Europe. And for two decades that is exactly what Hay

did, as he enjoyed his wife's wealth, indulged his hypochondria, and cultivated friends and acquaintances on both sides of the Atlantic. And indeed while he so traveled and rested, he did less and less in the literary line. It is true that the reverent reception of the serialization of *Abraham Lincoln* fostered the publication of a collective volume of his *Poems* (1890).

Yet, with the exception of a handful of poems published in periodicals, there would be no more literature from Hay's pen. That is not to say, however, that his fame as a writer diminished after 1890. On the contrary, this period was the time for the fullest recognition of his literary accomplishments. Hay's politics, in the 1890s, were entirely national, and, in 1897, he secured the ambassadorial appointment to the Court of St. James. In the course of his spectacularly successful tenure in England, his poems were rediscovered by the English and reprinted in London. Although he would claim that the call back to Washington marked an end to his long-desired peace and equanimity, he agreed to assume the position of secretary of state and arrived in the capital on 1 October 1898. Even had Hay wanted to resume his literary career (he wrote a poem now and then, including a sonnet to Theodore Roosevelt), he no longer had the time, energy, or spirit to do so.

Hay's literary fame began to wane almost, it seems, from the moment of his death. There were, in 1905, obligatory reprintings in journals of his poems, of the story "The Blood Seedling," and even—though his authorship still had not been publicly acknowledged—of *The Bread-winners*. In 1906 his *Addresses* were published, but collected therein were only the statements of an official known for his tact and his politics (not, it should be noted, the pieces he wrote in the 1870s for the *Tribune* on the Chicago fire or on the down-and-out politics of the 1880s). *Pike County Ballads*, with fine illustrations by N.C. Wyeth, was republished in 1912; and after it had become public knowledge that Hay was the author of *The Bread-winners*, there appeared an edition in 1916 with an introduction by Clarence L. Hay, Hay's son. These were followed, in 1916, by the publication of Hay's *Complete Poetical Works*. After 1916 very little of his work appeared in print, with the important exception of the appearance in 1939 of *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay*, a selection culled from the material of the 1860s left in manuscript for seven decades.

It may well be, as Howells concluded, that Hay, after the mid-1880s, decided not to turn again to literature, thereby renouncing what was still possible for him, to "be one of our first poets, one of our first novelists, one of our first essayists, as he certainly became one of our first historians."⁶ But if there were lost opportunities, there were accomplishments: the Spanish essays, the realistically detailed short stories (admired by F.L. Pattee), the socioeconomic novel with its brilliant portrait of the "self-made" girl and its hard-line treatment of organized labor, the poems of narrative and statement, the biography of Lincoln, and the letters written by, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "The best letter-writer of his age."⁷

Perhaps the way in which John Hay understood his successful life in letters and politics, best expressed in a "distich" he included in *Poems*, offers a way

to measure it: "Try not to beat back the current, yet be not drowned in its waters;/ Speak with the speech of the world, think with the thoughts of the few."⁸

Hay's Pike County Poetry and Fiction

Writing in 1916, F.L. Pattee viewed John Hay's literary accomplishments in the brightest of lights. "Pike County Ballads" earned high marks, he thought. In that handful of poems Pattee saw evidence that Hay's "was one of those rare germinal minds that appear now and then to break into new regions and to scatter seed from which others are to reap the harvest." For the poems rang true at every point. "Their author had lived from his third until his thirteenth year in full view of the Mississippi River," wrote Pattee, and "like Mark Twain he had played about the steamboat wharf, picking up the river slang and hearing the rude stories of the pilots and the deck hands. Warsaw, moreover, was on the trail of Western immigration, a place where all the border types might be studied." Hay also saw, later, "in Pittsfield, the county seat of Pike County," the Pike "at home untouched by contact with others—the Golyers, the Frys, the Shelbys, and all the other drinkers of 'whisky-skins.'"⁹

The first three of the Pike County ballads—"Banty Tim," "Jim Bludso (of the Prairie Belle)" and "Little Breeches"—catapulted Hay to immediate fame. Contemporary arguments over whether Hay or his friend Bret Harte had been the first to exploit the dialects of the American West served both to promote their fame and to delay the assessment of Hay's achievement. Although there was no doubt that his poems captured the rhythmic speech of the Pike County man, the notion that such speech did not provide fit substance for poetry would long plague Hay. It was not immediately recognized that the poems were not primarily attacks on common poetic speech, but rather sly barbs aimed at the conventional morality of his day. In *Jim Bludso* Hay presents a hard-talking bigamist who is nevertheless capable of Christian self-sacrifice. This rude practitioner of a religion of humanity, according to the poet, could hardly suffer retribution from a true Christian God. If this poetically unconventional statement did not receive unanimous approval, it did tap a vein of largely unexpressed feelings. With tears in her eyes, George Eliot frequently recited by heart "Jim Bludso," and in *Ulysses* Joyce has Leopold Bloom on his way to the brothel, ruminate: "I did all a white man could . . . Jim Bludso. Hold her nozzle again the bank."

By 1923, Pattee had shifted his attention from Hay's poems to his short stories. He regretted the fact that in the 1870s Hay's stories had been less influential in the development of the American short story than those of Bret Harte. "What might have been the result had John Hay and not Bret Harte been fated to direct the course of the short story through the 'seventies we may judge, perhaps, from his strong tale, 'The Blood Seedling,' . . . and that later story of his, 'A Foster Brother,' which so influenced Bronson Howard's drama 'Moorcroft.' As it is, two decades in the history of the short story form must be denominated the era of Bret Harteism—an era on the whole of small advance."¹⁰

One reason for Hay's failure to direct the course of the American short story through the 1870s was his own forfeiture of any such role, for "The Blood Seedling," published in 1871 when he was thirty-three, was to be his last completed story (see Appendix). While Bret Harte continued to write for magazines and to collect his stories into books that were immediately popular, Hay turned from the short story altogether, not even bothering at the last to collect the few stories he had written.

To talk about Hay's career as a short-story writer, then, is to deal with no more than a dozen years in a long, if sporadic, literary life. Even so, there is impressive range and significant variation in the stories we have. In them Hay experimented with several of the types of stories available to him. There are touches and hints of Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and his beloved Edgar Poe. But they remain only touches, after all, not borrowed patterns or imitated styles. It is clear from these stories that Hay was looking for his own style, his own fictional voice. It is also clear that in "The Blood Seedling" he found it, only to abandon promptly the short-story form altogether.

Even by way of introduction, there is much to say about Hay's two Pike County stories; but we can limit ourselves to pointing to a few salient features.

In a crucial sense, "The Foster-Brothers" (1869) is an allegory on the themes of slavery, miscegenation, and black versus white. The story is set in the towns of "Thebes" and "Moscow" along the Mississippi. The time of the story, though "not many years ago," is yet a time which has since seen "a continent . . . dripped in blood" arise "from the red baptism cleansed of its deadliest sin." This obvious reference to the Civil War and to that peculiar institution of slavery comes in the second paragraph of the story. At first it seems to be merely the author's way of setting his tale in historical time. But in actuality this reference foreshadows the meaning of the story which is about to unfold.

The stranger who visits Moscow is a Southerner on a tour of the West and North, a journey taken at his father's behest. In antebellum days, the father has decided that the "North" will be "a foreign nation in a few years," and consequently he is anxious that his son "see something of the present *régime*." The plot depends much upon an initial coincidence: the visiting Southerner, Clarence Brydges, is taken with the charms and beauty of a midwestern belle, Miss Des Ponts. Mimi Des Ponts's father, a lawyer, is prosperous and highly cultured. The author's description of the honorable Victor Des Ponts is deeply revealing:

He was certainly a strikingly handsome man; a clear, dark skin; black eyes under straight brows; a square forehead and resolute jaw; the mouth almost concealed by a grizzled mustache, a feature not then so common as now; the whole face framed with glossy and luxuriant black curls. There was a strong general resemblance to his daughter; yet they were curiously unlike. The fine animal beauty of his face was in hers lit up and spiritualized by the glancing light of a vivid intelligence.

Consciously, the author intends his attitude to be favorable, but his racial assumptions bleed through the terms of this description. Victor Des Ponts's features—chin, jaw, eyes, "luxuriant" black curls—all add up to "fine animal beauty." The message is telegraphed and it is clear. We are in the presence of someone who is "passing" for white. Victor Des Ponts may be in every other way the white man's equal, but visually, and kinetically, he is different. We cannot help inferring that it is the salutary influence of his racist wife's white blood which had "spiritualized" his daughter's features.

Inevitably, love grows between Victor Des Ponts's daughter and Clarence Brydges, and just as inevitably we move toward a confrontation between Victor Des Ponts and the elder Brydges. Less inevitably, that obligatory meeting occurs on the dark waters of the Mississippi (where Mark Twain would later place Huck and Jim on their odyssey away from political and social slavery), and it takes place when in the darkness of night Victor Des Ponts rescues a man who improbably turns out to be his "foster-brother" even as the river steamer that brought Brydges to Moscow burns in the distance. This archetypal confrontation between "foster-brothers," one black and a slave, the other white and the slave's master, turns on the intricacies of miscegenation. The white man's intransigent refusal to permit the marriage of his son to his former slave's daughter leads ineluctably to the river death of both fathers: "the foster-brothers went to the bottom locked in each other's arms." Ironically, their deaths are subsequently interpreted as the tragic result of an act of brotherly love, while the truth is that one death is a "fratricide" and the other a suicide.

The historical point of Hay's allegory is fairly clear. The blood bath that was the Civil War was necessary for the cleansing of the national soul. But the freedom of future generations might well demand the death of the unreconstructible Southerner as well as that of the "passing" black. For both, according to the terms of the allegory, are steeped in a common guilt. But the story does not stop here. When the slave carries his master down to death at the bottom of the river, Hay touches on an allegorical meaning that perhaps he himself did not want: blotting out the facts of heritage (through the death of the fathers) will enable the young miscegenated couple to live out their lives, hostage only to that fortune which is uniquely theirs. Purists will find flaws in "The Foster-Brothers"; others will find that, socially and historically, Hay's story has a lively and durable significance.

In "The Blood Seedling" Hay introduces the Warsaw family life he would draw upon in the *Pike County Ballads* (Colonel Blood, for instance, and the Golyers, i.e., the Gallaghers, as Hay explained in an unfinished story—see Appendix). In this story Hay abandoned the theme of racial fear and miscegenation, to pursue the equally promising, and personally more congenial, theme of rural tragedy among simple farm people. "The Blood Seedling" presents a situation that recalls the interests of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The idea of guilt which lies fallow and unexpiated for twenty years is reminiscent, particularly, of "Roger Malvin's Burial" and *The Scarlet Letter*; while the evening visit of Hay's prosperous farmer to a crazed medium shows the traces, possibly, of Goodman Brown's pres-

ence at the Black Man's unholy rites. But it is not its affinity with Hawthorne's fiction, one should add, that accounts for the overall power of Hay's story. To explain that, one must go to the style, the authorial tone, the firm construction of the tale, and, more specifically, the sure handling of the tale's central symbol, the apple seedling prophetically named for Colonel Blood.

There can be no doubt that Hay wrote this story out of root experience. He decided to write about those individuals who are sometimes dismissed genially as "good country people." He wanted to show that within such individuals existed a potential for malevolence and evil, along with an equal capacity for virtue: which was to remind us that there existed as well a full potential for tragedy. Out of that "colorless and commonplace picture of rural Western life" (Hay's words), there emerged a forceful story of the destiny that a man's own heart can make for him.

Secretly committing murder at the very time that he plants the apple seedling which will symbolize his portion of a happy and prosperous life, Allen Golyer sows the seed for his own knowledge of evil. Having killed out of love and anger, the young farmer regains his childhood sweetheart, marries her, and prospers for twenty years. In no apparent way does his secret crime affect his outward life. But the knowledge of evil will have its out, it seems, and the author, in a decidedly strong stroke, structures Golyer's moral retribution in a credibly "Western" way. Through an indifferent, distracted, neurasthenic medium whose emotional life has been nurtured on that cynosure of the last century, Emanuel Swedenborg, the unfortunate farmer has revealed to him at last what, in his compulsion, he would fear: the details of his ancient crime and the publication of the fact that his guilt remains unexpiated.

There are other fine touches in the story. For example, Bertie Leon, the bag-man for the St. Louis house of Draper & Mercer who becomes Golyer's victim, is typically dandified, philandering, and urbanely corrupt, penetrating the more innocent hamlets of the "West" to seduce their prime maidens. But for all his guile and his corruption, he does not manage to commit murder. That sin is reserved for the seemingly uncomplicated farmer, whose open ways and rude manner are no match for the articulate drummer. In a second example, the author, employing "the Blood seedling" to open and to close the Golyer tragedy and as a recurrent motif as well, allows the meaning of that symbol to emerge gracefully and powerfully. With deftness he turns the seedling into a symbol for prosperity and goodness, laid out for his characters, before he allows the same seedling to swell into the reader's symbol for evil.

The narrative, from start to finish, is told with authorial sureness and in the even-tempered tone we expect of a particular kind of artist at his maturity. The author reveals his principals as he has come to know them, with no highlights or special effects forced at their expense. In the decade marked by Bret Harte's sentimentalism, and a full two decades before Hamlin Garland offered his bleakly realistic stories of the agrarian "west," John Hay wrote a fine tale that unfolds its universal meaning with the very rhythm and pace of human experience.

In "The Blood Seedling" John Hay moved away from his earlier themes, discovering, at one fell swoop it would seem, his own fictional voice. It is lamentable that he chose not to work his claim. It is also understandable, given the circumstances of Hay's life in 1870-71, that, after a daily stint as editorial writer for the *Tribune*, he would have neither the time nor the energy to write full-blown short stories. Yet Pike County, still present in memory and imagination, found its creative outlet in the ballads that, inspired by the slightly earlier performances of Bret Harte (especially "Chiquita," "Dow's Flat," and "Plain Language from Truthful James"), flowered in the pages of the *New York Tribune* in late 1870 and early 1871. Not for a dozen years would Hay return to fiction, and by the time he did so he had himself cornered a few choice lots and had become more interested in the propagandistic potential of the popular novel than in its potential for portraying the varieties of life and for laying bare the verities of character. In a sense, the novel he wrote in 1883, *The Bread-winners*, constituted still another departure for Hay, for its writing was an act altogether typical, after all, of the author's entire life. Hay could not rest in one place, with one form or theme, long enough to consolidate gains. No sooner did the writer complete a first experiment than he skipped on to something else. It is somehow characteristic that in the twenty-one years remaining to him after *The Bread-winners*, Hay would write no second novel, despite the fact that his first attempt at novel-writing had been both a commercial and a critical success. Poetry he would continue to write to the end of his life, of course, even during his seven years as America's first modern secretary of state, but by 1883 John Hay had finished with prose fiction.

NOTES

1. *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 503.
2. "John Hay in Literature," *North American Review* 181 (September 1905), 343.
3. *A Poet in Exile: Early Letters of John Hay*, ed. Caroline Ticknor (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1910), pp. 18-19.
4. MS letter, David Gray to John Hay, 24 December 1872, Brown University Libraries. Quoted with consent.
5. William Roscoe Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), I, 386.
6. "John Hay in Literature," p. 350.
7. *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Elting E. Morison *et al* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951-54), 6:1490.
8. *The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay*, introduction by Clarence L. Hay (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), p. 185.
9. *A History of American Literature Since 1870* (New York: Century, 1916), p. 91.
10. *The Development of the American Short Story: An Historical Survey* (New York: Harper, 1923), pp. 286-87.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND TEXTUAL NOTE

John Hay's stories, "The Foster-Brothers" and "The Blood Seedling," were first published, respectively, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (September 1869), 39:535-44, and *Lippincott's Magazine* (March 1871), 7:281-93. These texts, with obvious typographical errors corrected silently, are reproduced here. For Hay's poems, the first six texts reproduced here are those in *Poems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890). The seventh text is in *The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916). The individual poems were first published (to the best of our knowledge): "Little-Breeches" (*New York Tribune*, 19 November 1870), "Jim Bludso (of the Prairie Belle)" (*New York Tribune*, 5 January 1871), "Banty Tim" (*New York Tribune*, 6 April 1871), "The Mystery of Gilgal" (*New York Tribune*, 11 May 1871), "Golyer" (*Poems*, 1890), "The Pledge at Spunky Point" (*Harper's Weekly-Supplement*, 7 March 1874), and "Benoni Dunn" (*Complete Poetical Works of John Hay*, 1916).

2

Tales

The Foster-Brothers

One April morning, not many years ago, Mr. Cade Marshall, having nothing else to do for the moment, stood on his door-step and looked at the Mississippi River.

It was not many years ago—yet since then a thousand glories and shames have dazzled and affronted the world; myriads of bright things have been darkened, and dark things brought to light; a continent has been dipped in blood, and has arisen from the red baptism cleansed of its deadliest sin. There is not a man now living who has precisely the same political ideas which he had on that April morning when Mr. Cade Marshall, idly enjoying the spring sunshine, looked from the door-step of his house on an Illinois bluff at the great river, and over it to the Missouri shore.

Mr. Marshall had been a Bachelor of Arts half a year. He had spent this time at home in the city of Moscow, Illinois, an ambitious town that had stretched itself so far over the hills and hollows skirting the river that it seemed doubtful whether it would ever knit its overgrown members firmly together. It had cut one hill in two, in the hope of a bridge which never was built. It had filled up one ravine, in preparation for a railroad which never arrived. It had a special charter from the Legislature, in case it should ever be big enough to need a city government; and it embraced several miles of the adjoining country within its corporate limits, to get taxes enough to keep up the expense of fire and lights for its Common Council. With its four or five thousand inhabitants it occupied about as much room as Paris, and sprawled over its half-dozen hills—as the elder Marshall once observed—“like a small but conceited hen trying to hatch a square yard of eggs.”

A Norse poet mentions, as among the prerogatives of the gods, that they always look down. So the city of Moscow, sprinkled over its ragged bluffs, enjoyed much substantial comfort in looking across the river to where the city of Thebes clung with a precarious foothold to the Missouri mud—only existing by sufferance of the great river.

It was with a certain comfortable sense of superiority to fluvial accidents that Cade Marshall walked to his gate and glanced down the steep hill-path, two hundred feet fall to the water-side.

“The river is certainly rising,” he thought, “and yet the *Lucy Bertram* seems to be stuck to the landing.” But the steamer, which had been blowing and whistling, and ringing bells, and stirring up the yellow sand with her revolving paddles, now swung loose and headed for the Illinois shore, dancing coquettishly sideways over the water, keeping her head up stream.

Two or three men with revolvers in their hands went shuffling by the gate.

"Thar she blows. Hurry up! Hi! or you won't fetch her."

"You bet I fetch her," answered a tall man with blue goggles. "'Mornin', Mr. Marshall! Come along and help tie up the *Lucy*."

Mr. Marshall, much amused at being thus suddenly enrolled in the constable's *posse*, followed that functionary and said, "What has she been guilty of, Captain Ketchum?"

"Why, Jim Whaler missed his carpet-bag as he was a-comin' up from St. Louis, and he swears he believes the cap'n stoled it. I reckon he never done it; but that ain't my business. The cap'n offered to compermise by payin' for what was into it. So Jim he drewed out a list: one bowie-knife, one plug o' terbacker, one deck o' keerds, and two shirts. When the cap'n seed that he just sung out, 'Oh, gas! Two shirts! when did you ever git two shirts?' So Jim he's got his back up, and he's took out a 'tachment, and we're goin' down to tie up the *Lucy* 'till they pay."

"Did you have the shirts, Jim?" said Marshall to the injured Whaler.

"I will, 'fore I'm done with 'em."

They reached the landing just as a deck hand came ashore to cast off the cable.

"Hold on there, my African brother," shouted Ketchum. The sulky Whaler stood by the rope, while the constable went on board and served process. Marshall went with him. As they reached the bar-room a youthful figure started up from near the stove, and a clear, hearty voice shouted, "Bless your dissolute heart, Occidental! how are you?"

Marshall started at the familiar college nickname, and turning, saw his friend and classmate, Clarence Brydges.

"*A la bonne heure!* Where is your luggage? Why didn't you tell me you were coming?"

"I am not coming. I am going to St. Paul."

"St. Paul can wait. Your boat is tied up. The captain and our constable will quarrel all day. You must go home with me. Give me your checks. 'False, fleeting, perjured Clarence,' to slip by without ungirding yourself beneath my roof-tree."

Brydges was soon convinced by the highly-seasoned discourse of the captain that his friend had spoken truth. They went on shore, and Marshall called a broad-shouldered, dwarfish German boy.

"Chris, take this trunk to my father's. Where is your cart?"

"I don't got none a'ready. Hans Doppelfritz his stief-vater gone dead directly, und mine gart is a funeral. I pack him selbst."

He seized the heavy trunk and trotted up the steep hill-side like a mountain-goat.

Marshall and Brydges were preparing to follow, when Whaler rushed up, all the sulkiness gone from his hang-dog face.

"The cap'n's compermised. He agrees to pay for one shirt and treat the crowd. Come, take a drink, gentlemen."

At that moment a negro came running off the boat with a shabby carpet-bag

in his hand. Whaler saw him, and grew sulkier than ever. He took the thin, leprous-looking bag of black oil-cloth from the porter, who bowed and grinned, vainly expectant of backshish, and slunk away muttering unorthodox expressions in regard to his "misfortnit luck." He disappeared up the sunken road to the town, followed by Ketchum and his friends, who made frequent and jeering reference to "them shirts."

The steamer, after expressing by emphatic growling and puffing her indignation at the "law's delay," went on her way up the river. The friends slowly ascended the hill to Marshall's house. This was a large, rambling structure, originally built for the block-house of Fort Johnstone in the early Indian wars, with numerous additions and changes that had completely transformed it into a comfortable modern residence—as comfort is understood in the West—something very different from the Sybarite luxury of Fifth Avenue or the Back Bay.

"I am not sorry this happened," said Brydges. "There is no real occasion for me to hurry to St. Paul. I am making a rapid tour at the request of my father through the North. I have been reading some law in Mobile this winter, and the governor wants me, before beginning to practice, to see something of your country. You know he is a little *tête-montée* on this secession question. He thinks you will be a foreign nation in a few years, and he is anxious that I should see something of the present *régime*."

"Very well. Stay here and see it."

"But he insists on my passing all my time at representative places. St. Paul, as a north-west bastion of your power; Chicago, the home of the gnomes—the supernatural workers; Boston, your light-house; and New York, your 'ventral ganglion.' I have his positive commands against stopping for a day any where else."

"Except in case of accidents. We will prepare a new one every day until we fill a chapter, which we will send to your respected ancestor with our dutiful regards."

Coming to the house they found Mr. Marshall the elder sitting in his easy-chair on the long veranda. A fresh, rosy, black-haired old gentleman, who could even yet break a colt, or crack walnuts with his fingers.

"You are heartily welcome. Mr. Brydges. Don't stare; there is no second-sight in my knowing your name. That little Kobold Chris has come with your trunk, and I have sent it to your room. Will you go in, or stay here? When you are my age you will seize every moment of such lovely weather, and keep where there is most of it."

The young men brought chairs and sat in the soft spring sunshine. The impulse of awakening life was faintly visible on the bluffs, where the dry grass began to show an under-tinge of green. The warm light lay richly on the broad river and the brown leafless-wooded islands, and touched softly in the blue distance the high hills beyond the Missouri flats.

Brydges, who was looking at the town of Thebes, which lies in the delta of the Des Moines and Mississippi rivers, said, suddenly.

“What a quantity of ponds there are in that town!”

“Ponds that have come there since morning,” answered Colonel Marshall, quietly. “If the river keeps its present mood it will sponge that town away in a few days.”

“If you would like to see the village before the catastrophe we will go over after dinner,” said Cade, laughing. “My father has so often prophesied the damp bad end of Thebes that we have come to regard him as a Muscovite Cassandra.”

The Marshalls dined at the orthodox Illinois hour of one. Mrs. Marshall received her guest with the simplest courtesy, and made him feel instantly at home.

“I am never quite happy,” she said, “when my table is three-sided. So you must keep that place, Mr. Brydges, till you are relieved.”

The young men went down to the ferry in the afternoon and crossed over to Thebes. The river was tawny with mud and filled with the varied drift of the northern forests.

“The river is still on the rise, Captain?” said Marshall to the skipper of the *Osprey*, a long, silent, ruminant man.

“She’s jest a-boomin’,” said Captain Apple, increasing the volume of the stream by about a gill of nicotized saliva. “Five inches yisterday, and the big end o’ that sence mornin’. The Dessmine is worse yet. Ef I was a rat in a cellar, I’d move up garret about these here times.”

The *Osprey* came to the wharf, which had almost disappeared beneath the encroaching river. With that obstinate unbelief of the disagreeable that has been given us doubtless to prevent our suffering misfortunes in anticipation, the dealers in cord-wood were busy in removing large quantities of it from the waterline, and piling it a few feet further from the shore—to be moved again next day.

Marshall and Brydges walked through the town. It had been built before the levee, and so was on an average several feet lower. The side-streets and back-yards were therefore already invaded by the waters. A great quantity had come in during the night, creeping over the low banks of the Des Moines, and attacking the town in its unleveed and therefore defenseless rear. Many flat gardens and hollow commons were suddenly filled up with the muddy flood, as if it had soaked through the thin soil from below. A good many houses were built, with a sort of make-shift foresight, on detached piles. These stood clear for the present from the wet, looking like slatternly women holding up their draggled skirts. One dreary frame-house they saw where the piles had given way at one end, and the house stood helplessly with one corner in the air and one in the slough. They had the indiscretion to look in at the window nearest the road, and saw a sallow woman frying bacon at a stove lashed to the wall, and some ragged urchins in high glee climbing the sloping floor like flies, and sliding down again like musk-rats.

Every where a dismal air of make-shift. All the gates were tied up with ropes—the latches all gone. At the front-doors of several rather ambitious-looking houses a small ladder supplied the place of a porch. Many of the houses were unpainted, and looked prematurely old and shabby. Every thing seemed to say, What is the use? Dirty clay-colored curs lounged on the muddy door-steps with a dispirited

and dejected air. The very streets, that started with fair prospects, seemed to grow discouraged and to flatten supinely out into bottomless black mud. The cats found it difficult to make their visits with any regard to neat feet. Long, gaunt, red-haired hogs grunted unsociably in the dry spots that were yet left them, too listless to be hungry.

In the best quarter of the town the two friends came to a large barn-like church with an unfinished steeple, around which the scaffolding was falling to pieces. Here the sidewalk was elevated upon poles to the level of the fence-posts. This had been done some years before in the stress of former floods, and no one had as yet had energy enough to take it down. Turning its corner they found themselves before a larger and better house than any they had before seen. The garden before the door was completely submerged. A young girl standing upright in a light skiff sculled it dextrously about the garden with a long oar. It was a very pretty picture—the exquisite form swaying to every movement of the frail boat, the warm sunshine touching with gold lights the dark brown hair.

“Who has not heard of a jolly young waterman?” sang Marshall.

She turned, and with one stroke of the oar brought her skiff to the gate; she gave her hand to Marshall with a gay “Good-morning.”

“Miss Des Ponts, let me present my friend Mr. Brydges.”

“Will you tempt the dangers of the deep and come in?” she said.

Marshall looked at Brydges, who eagerly nodded assent.

“You will come first, Mr. Brydges,” said the fair mariner. “Mr. Marshall is *chez lui* in my boat.”

She gave Brydges her hand to assist him into the boat. It was a soft white hand—the hand of a marquise,” Balzac would have said—with a firm and vigorous grasp. Arriving at the door-step she stepped lightly out of the skiff, and led her visitors into a cheerful-looking drawing-room carpeted in warm bright colors, richly furnished and curtained, where a brisk fire of hickory logs cracked and sparkled in the wide chimney.

“A fancy of papa’s,” said Miss Des Ponts. “He insists upon this open fire until the first of May, even if we have a torrid April like this. Cade, open the windows.”

Mr. Marshall obeyed the peremptory order; then, in the same familiar tone, said, “Mimi, when are you coming over to spend the forty diluvial days and nights?”

“Silence, rash Muscovite! The river is merely performing its fertilizing office for the city of its love. It will be in its bed to-morrow.”

“And to-morrow and to-morrow,” added Marshall, tragically.

“I am ashamed to own,” said Miss Des Ponts, “that papa has been carried away by the prevailing stampede. He wanted the furniture moved up stairs yesterday, but I fought hard and got a reprieve till to-day. I thought it would be a sort of treason to the river to distrust its honorable intentions.”

“Pray let us hear your piano once more before it is banished to the attic.”

She went to the instrument, and her fingers strayed for a moment over the

keys, "building a bridge from dream-land." She then played with singular feeling and expression a low, solemn, dirge-like movement, which neither of the gentlemen recognized, but which was intensely thrilling and saddening. It closed with a sudden and startling discord, and she instantly broke into one of the younger Strauss's most Champagne mazurkas, which she gave with such grace and spirit that Marshall vowed he could see the flash of white satin boots, and catch the distant popping of corks in the supper-room.

Brydges, who had been somehow vaguely annoyed at the easy familiarity existing between Marshall and Miss Des Ponts, had taken no part in the conversation. While she played he devoured her with his eyes. If she seemed lovely in the broad light outside, she was vastly more so now; her brown eyes softened by feeling, her exquisite lips slightly parted, a delicate tinge hovering like the first flush of dawn on the perfect pale cheek.

Her eyes lighted on Brydges for an instant as she played the last lively bars.

"I hope you will remain some time," she said. "I have heard Mr. Marshall say so much of you that I have been quite anxious to know you."

Brydges hardly knew whether to be pleased or vexed. This lovely, intrepid, self-possessed girl, treating him with this utterly unconventional frankness, was not at all flattering to his *amour-propre*. He jumped to the hasty conclusion that she must be *fiancée* to Marshall. He felt half inclined to hate them both. He hated himself worse for feeling embarrassed by the steady glance of the soft brown eyes.

"Yes—that is, not long," he stammered; then added, with unnecessary emphasis, "I am going to-morrow."

Marshall laughed and said, "Mimi, he will spend a week or two with us. Your music shall soothe his savage breast till we get tired of him and send him on his way, a sadder and a better man."

They rose to go. Miss Des Ponts rang, and a silver-haired negro answered.

"Take these gentlemen to the gate, Darby;" but, glancing out of the window, she exclaimed, "No! voilà, papa! I will go myself."

As they sculled over the garden Marshall said, "Des Ponts translates Brydges."

"Not oversets, I hope, as Father Krakwity would say," she answered, laughing.

Mr. Des Ponts stood at the gate. There was a hurried introduction and word of greeting.

"My mother expects you every day, and hereafter we wait dinner for you," said Marshall.

Des Ponts looked troubled and anxious.

"I fear we *must* very soon claim your hospitality. This rise looks serious. The Des Moines is full of back-water for miles. The 'oldest inhabitants' are talking like screech-owls this afternoon."

"Never mind, mon petit papa. Here's a sigh for those that love us, and a smile for those that hate, and—and—before it gets above us, perhaps it may abate"; and father and daughter sculled to their beleaguered mansion.

As Marshall and Brydges walked to the ferry they saw evident signs of consternation among the towns-people. Those who lived in two-story houses were engaged in emptying their ground-floors, while the groundlings were begging room "under the shingles" from their more fortunate neighbors. Still, some esprits forts were walking calmly about deriding and pooh-poohing, and demonstrating by all the almanacs known that this "was not a high-water year."

That evening the young gentlemen were smoking on the veranda in the dim, confidential starlight. Brydges said, apropos of nothing: "Cade, I congratulate you. Miss Des Ponts is an excessively pretty girl."

"My dear Clarence, you have more taste than sagacity. I have no property whatever in Mimi Des Ponts's unquestionable beauty."

"Why not?" rejoined Brydges, in a somewhat querulous tone. "You don't mean that there are more of that style of girls in the neighborhood; and whom, besides you, would *she* look at hereaway?"

"It is very sweet of you, gentle stranger, to say such things of both of us. Mimi and I love each other too well to be lovers, I suppose. I never had any sister but her; nor she ever a brother but me. We made mud-pies together, and fought over the first strawberries of the season. But I have never thought of availing myself of my evident advantages. I have magnanimously waited for some handsome pilgrim with blue eyes to come, and, if worthy and enterprising, to win her."

"Elle vaut bien la peine."

"*You* have the requisite Gothic complexion; you will have idleness and juxtaposition in your favor in a day or two. The great river is working valiantly for you to-night."

"What a superb picture of quiet power!" said Brydges. "There it flows, pouring out over the level bottoms the flood of ten thousand thunder-storms, annihilating farms, fields, and villages, and not the murmur of a ripple comes up to us in this deep silence. It was a true artistic thought of the old religions that made gods of the rivers."

"Yes. I think even Carlyle would respect the Mississippi—so much work with so little talk."

From the window of his chamber that night Clarence Brydges looked out once more upon the vast and broadening sheet of water, and the twinkling lights of the village by the shore. One, he fancied, without any reason except its brightness, was lighting Marie Des Ponts to rest. He gazed musingly at this light till it suddenly disappeared.

"Good-night, and happy dreams," he murmured; then added, "Well, I have given that dark-eyed Missourian enough of my thoughts to-night," and went on thinking of nothing else till he fell asleep.

In the morning, as he came out upon the veranda, he saw the Colonel gazing intently at something in the river. "Cade, my son, get my field-glass. Good-morning, Mr. Brydges. I hope you had pleasant dreams your first night at Fort Johnstone. You know they are to come true, according to our received traditions."

Cade handed him the glass. He glanced at the object that had puzzled him,

and laughed—a hearty, strutting, crowing sort of laugh, and handed the glass to Brydges. “There, I don’t believe even so blasé a veteran as yourself ever saw a sight like that before.”

It was a chicken-coop floating down the river, its hapless inmates roosting on the roof with an air of draggled and desperate resignation. It was a slight but most significant specimen of the night’s work.

“Look across the river, Mr. Brydges. The ponds of yesterday are lakes and bays. Behind the town the prairie is one vast sheet of water to the bluffs. Below us the Illinois shore is invaded; the bottom will be flooded to-morrow.”

“We shall have the Des Ponts to dinner, doubtless.”

“Yes; and then, Mr. Brydges, look out for your heart, if you carry any such light baggage.”

The theme was one on which the old gentleman was always eloquent. He began his usual rhapsody, but was soon interrupted by a summons to breakfast.

“Who is Mr. Des Ponts?” asked Brydges, when they were seated at table.

“Lawyer by profession, gentleman by practice,” said Cade.

“The richest man in Thebes, and the best bred man in Missouri,” said Mrs. Marshall.

“He is a French creole,” said the Colonel, “who has the good taste to speak English without lisping. He has good books and good wine, and he buys both himself. The most curious thing about him is that every body owes him money and nobody hates him.”

“But,” said Clarence, “why does this phenix of Missourians live in the Theban waste?”

“Ah, that is his most amiable point,” said Mrs. Marshall. “He is bound by a promise to the late Madame Des Ponts. She was an enthusiastic Southern woman, who thought a free State the abomination of desolation; even wrote a florid pamphlet called the ‘Curse of Canaan’; said she did not see how one could be a Christian and not own slaves, when their means permitted; and I believe honestly doubted whether negroes had souls. She has often said to me that she wished it could be shown that a certain famous text should read in the original, ‘Suffer little white children to come unto me.’”

Every one laughed except Mr. Brydges.

“I always thought,” the jolly old lady went on, “that Des Ponts recognized as clearly as any one the absurdity of Madame’s opinions. But he never disputed with her, and often, when she was hard pressed in a discussion, he would come to her rescue with some brilliant paradox that left one in doubt which side he was really on. She never doubted, I am sure. I never saw a husband so worshiped by his wife. Though one of the proudest of the Shelbys, she delighted in displaying her entire subjection to him. I believe she would have polished his boots if he had permitted it.”

“O si sic omnes,” said the Colonel, and the young men groaned in unison.

Mrs. Marshall continued, scorning the interruption: “She never lost her early infatuation for Des Ponts. The very year she died she and I were in the drawing-

room, and Mr. Marshall and he were on the veranda. She looked at him some time in rapt contemplation, and said at last: 'Who could look at that noble form and godlike brow and then think without disgust of Jefferson's clap-trap of the equality of men?'"

"She would have preferred," said Cade, "the dictum of our Pomp—"One man is as good as anuddah, an' a heap bettah."

"When her last illness came she seemed to regret nothing but leaving Des Ponts. She would not be pacified till he swore—most reluctantly, and after a terrible scene—that he would never take Marie to a Northern State. For she said she hoped still to be with them in spirit, and she could not follow them into Yankee barbarism. So, ever since, poor Des Ponts has lived in that hideous swamp—the Despontine Marshes, as Cade says."

"But why not go South?" said Brydges.

"I imagine he prefers, while keeping his vow faithfully, to live in this extreme corner of slave territory, in sight of free sky and soil."

Brydges bit his lip; and Mrs. Marshall, remembering too late from what latitude he came, talked of pleasant trifles, and put too much sugar in his second cup of coffee by way of apology.

About noon the wagoner, Chris, having reclaimed his cart from its funereal functions, drove up to the back-door, and leaping down, shouldered a vast Saratoga trunk, with which he marched into the house.

"Vere I packs him? Die schoene Fräulein is comin' bimeby a'ready mit 'm Herr Vater. Mein Gott! Die is wunderschoen," he said, grotesquely kissing his stubby finger-ends.

By the time the luggage was bestowed the exiles were at the door.

The Colonel met them with his hearty, old-fashioned courtesy:

"La Rochefoucauld was right. There *is* something in the misfortunes of our best friends that does not altogether displease us."

He shook hands with Des Ponts and kissed the neat glove of Marie. She nodded smilingly to the young men, and entered the house with Mrs. Marshall.

"I should have come yesterday," said Des Ponts, "had it not been for that indomitable Shelby pluck of Mimi. We moved the furniture to the second floor in the afternoon; but she still insisted that the river would fall, and so we drank tea in the dismantled parlor, and then sat by the fire till the water poured over the floor and flooded the hearth. 'What am I to do with my feet?' she coolly inquired. 'Would it be quite lady-like to put them on the mantle-piece?' I took her in my arms and waded to the stairs, and carried her up to bed. This morning she got into the skiff from her chamber-window by a rope-ladder—and ever since she calls me Romeo!"

While he was speaking Brydges observed him more closely than he had previously done. He was certainly a strikingly handsome man: a clear, dark skin; black eyes under straight brows; a square forehead and resolute jaw; the mouth almost concealed by a grizzled mustache, a feature not then so common as now; the whole face framed with glossy and luxuriant black curls. There was a strong general re-

semblance to his daughter; yet they were curiously unlike. The fine animal beauty of his face was in hers lit up and spiritualized by the glancing light of a vivid intelligence. Seeing them together you would think of a head in clay copied in porcelain.

He turned, and his eyes met those of Brydges. Darting a keen glance at the young man, in which one could almost have fancied there was an expression of defiance, he said, abruptly.

"My daughter tells me you are from Mobile. How long have you lived there?"

"All my life."

"Have you relatives of your name in Savannah?"

"No."

Brydges was a little annoyed at this peremptory interrogatory, and so answered very curtly. He did not feel inclined to say that his father had formerly resided in Savannah, but had married and settled in Mobile.

The intense expression vanished at once from the face of Des Ponts. He smiled cheerily, with a flash of splendid white teeth, and said,

"Pardon my summary questions—a relic of my bad lawyer habits. An accidental resemblance, doubtless. Colonel Marshall, Mr. Brydges is a proof of what I have so often told you, that you will find the pure blonde Saxon type oftener in the South than the North."

This remark induced an ethnological controversy between the two gentlemen, which lasted until dinner, and Brydges forgot the explanation he had intended to make.

In the evening Mrs. Marshall said, "Now, Mimi, you must sing for me. I get no music except in these flood times."

"I will sing you something entirely new, by a composer whose name I never heard before—a Mr. Boote, who lives in Florence. A friend of mine traveling in Italy copied and sent it to me. It takes hold of me wonderfully."

She sang in a rich, powerful, vibrating contralto a wild, lawless, but singularly thrilling air, to the words of Kingsley's "Sands o' Dee."

There came over Brydges, as she sang, that sense of mysterious recognition which all have sometimes felt, when every word and gesture falls inevitably into its place, as if we had known and foreseen it all for a thousand years. The other persons in the room became as shadows. He knew the song would cease in a moment, and there would be shadowy words of applause from those outside spectres. But while the wild, sobbing music lasted he and she were alone in the world of sensuous melody. Every touch of her fingers on the pearl and ebony keys fell on his heart, and the song they waked was, "She is mine, and no other's. I love her. I have loved her forever."

The song ended, and the spell was broken. At Cade's request Miss Des Ponts sang that brilliant serenade of Gounod's to Victor Hugo's delicious words, "*Chantez, riez, dormez.*" But Brydges only wondered at his ecstasy of a moment before. He looked with critical appreciation at the singer, and saw a superb young girl, as lovely as youth and beauty could make her, singing a showy song in an effective way. But, as if revenging himself for his momentary lapse from self-pos-

session, he thought—"A very pretty girl—a little too prononcée—not infrequently slangy—needs a year or two of better society than she can find in Thebes."

The next day Miss Des Ponts started for a gallop on the Carthage road, attended by her two cavaliers. Cade deserted very soon, riding off to visit the Colonel's farm, north of the town. "It is a remarkably porous soil," said Cade. "Absorbs every thing you put on it, and leaves no trace. Mimi, I hold you responsible for Mr. Brydges."

They rode an hour or two through the thick timber and the sunny lanes, and returned excellent friends. There was no resisting the charm of Marie's directness and sincerity. Her character had something manly in its frank, fearless honesty.

He was surprised at her unaffected sense of her own shortcomings. "I suspect it is not best for me to live as I do. Mamma died when I was a child, and I have grown up lawlessly with Victor. There—a new impropriety! I have always called him by his first name; instead of correcting me, he laughed and kissed me. So when I talked slang, till I am afraid I sometimes trip that way now, when I am old enough to know better. I read his books and his newspapers, and had no other education until Mrs. Marshall positively dragooned him into letting me go to school. I staid two years at the Visitation in St. Louis, and learned some music; then ran away and came back to him, and found him, I am sure, ten years older by the separation. I will not leave him again. And yet I know we ought not to live in that triste little town. I have so often begged him to go South, or to Congress, or somewhere. With his great talents and influence he could do every thing in politics. But he detests the very name. I believe he cares for nothing but me."

These words were uttered with an intonation indescribably sweet and winning. The great brown eyes were softened with unshed tears. But before Brydges could speak she struck her horse a smart blow with the riding-whip, and they went dashing homeward, accompanied by a cloud of dust and the yelping of scandalized curs.

The days passed on pleasantly enough with walking and riding and making visits in Moscow, where Marie knew every body and was universally admired. Mr. Des Ponts went every morning to Thebes, and passed an hour or two in his skiff, going from window to window of those acquaintances who valorously remained in their upper rooms, lulled nightly to sleep by the rushing of waters under their floors. Day after day Mr. Brydges said, resolutely, "I go to-morrow." But the weather was finer than he had ever seen, the skies bluer than ever had shone, and the Marshalls were the pleasantest hosts he ever had met. So he lingered, and still was traveling always into the borders of the Enchanted Land, which is as old as nature, yet newer and fresher and stranger than any thing on earth, to each young heart that finds it. He never asked himself how far he should go. The path was smooth and enticing, the air subtle and fine. Continually just beyond there was a bank of rare blossoms, a splendor of sunlight on the emerald lawns. He would go that far, and then? All the while the shuttle of Fate was flying swiftly about him, and weaving into the web of his life a richness and brilliancy it had never known.

One evening he and Miss Des Ponts were sitting alone on the veranda. They had been talking for an hour. The conversation was of the river, of the news, of books; at first animated, then languid, till it dropped into an embarrassed silence. Clarence had given himself utterly up to the delight of his eyes. Her delicate profile was defined against the clear dark sky of the west. The light of the young May moon lay on her rippled hair. She seemed in the faint glimmer almost too lovely to be real. As the young man gazed at her he forgot that she was talking, and even answered her questions at random. Surprised and perplexed, she ceased speaking.

He sat facing the river and the west, where the silver crescent hung above the Missouri hills. Forced by her silence to say something, he said, hastily, "Turn to the left and look at the new moon. It will bring you great good luck this month."

He seemed to himself to speak involuntarily—he listened with interest to his own words.

She turned to him. "I will not look at the moon. I want no luck. I am happy enough. Besides," she added, with a smile as delicate as the starlight, "I can see the moon now, in your eyes."

"Can you see any thing else there?"

She turned away, her heart beating with a vague apprehension.

"Can you see that I love you? that I worship you? that my free-will is gone? that—I love you?"

She covered her face with her hands.

"I have been living here in a dream. I see now what it means. It is fatal for good or ill. My whole life fails if I go from here without you. Marie, will you go with me?"

He paused for a moment.

"If you say nothing I shall go mad with a false hope."

She turned her glowing face toward him. Even in that dim light the radiance of a new and wonderful happiness shone in her perfect features with a faint opaline gleam. But her manner was more quiet and self-possessed than usual as she said,

"I wish you would bring my father to me."

"But, Miss Des Ponts, shall I not have one word—?"

"Please bring my father," she insisted, in a low, appealing tone that there was no resisting.

When they came out she went to her father and leaned upon his arm. In spite of his intense anxiety Brydges could not but admire the statuesque beauty of the group. So Iphigenia must have clung at Aulis to the King of Men; and so the greatest of the Greeks must have folded in his strong arm the most beautiful, protecting her against all the world but him.

"Victor, Mr. Brydges has asked me to be his wife. I will not answer without your sanction."

"My darling, follow your heart, and you will make me only less happy than yourself."

She gave Clarence her hand and said, "I never dreamed I could love two beings as I love my father and you."

Des Ponts went in, with a strange contest of pleasure and pain in his heart, and left the lovers in the dim light of the setting moon.

Before Clarence slept he wrote a long letter to his father, announcing his engagement and giving many details of the character and position of the Des Ponts. He did not ask his father's consent formally. He was so thoroughly convinced of the propriety of his action that he would have disregarded his father's absolute veto. But, nevertheless, he awaited with some interest Mr. Brydges's reply.

Among the occasional visitors at Fort Johnstone was a friend of Mr. Marshall, a lawyer of Moscow, with whose graceful, though somewhat formal bearing, measured speech, and thorough moderation, as well in speech as in opinion, Clarence was much impressed. One night when this gentleman was gone Mrs. Marshall said, "You would scarcely suppose that Mr. X _____ had been tried for murder and acquitted by a quibble?"

Brydges expressed his surprise.

"He was one of the slayers of the Mormon prophet Joe Smith, at our county jail."

"By-the-way, Clarence," said Cade, "would you not like to drive out to-morrow and see where the Church seed was spilled?"

Brydges gladly assented; and the young men drove over the prairie in the cool of the morning. After visiting the scene of the tragedy, Clarence, who had been remarkably taciturn and thoughtful all the morning, said, abruptly,

"I wish you would present me to your County Clerk. I want a marriage license."

"Bravo!" shouted Cade. "I see you never want to come here again. But it is not necessary. I can get your license whenever you want it."

"I may want it very soon. You know, Cade, I am fixed upon this marriage. No opposition from my father could change me. But Des Ponts and Marie are very spirited people. If my father should be whimsical enough to object, they might take umbrage. But if I could be married at once and go home with Marie, Monsieur mon père would yield to her beauty and grace as readily as did Monsieur his son."

"You are Sam Slick and Machiavel rolled into one. Here we are at the courthouse."

They got the license and drove home.

"Do you think they will consent to this chain-lightning plan of yours?"

"I do not think Marie will require much time. I imagine that in Thebes she has been uncorrupted by the mania of shopping. I *am* a little afraid of Des Ponts."

But to his surprise Des Ponts assented with alacrity to an immediate marriage. He said he should soon be compelled to make a journey to the East—perhaps to Europe. He would be glad to see his daughter's happiness secured before he started.

Marie at first protested loudly, but finding no sympathy in her lover or her father she flew to Mrs. Marshall, but found her equally hard-hearted.

"Nonsense, child," said the merry old lady. "We can make you lovely in half an hour. Why, Marshall proposed to me in this very fort while the long-roll was

beating one evening, and we were married before the guard was out."

Marie yielded with a pretty girlish grace, that had come in these last days as the finishing charm of a character formerly, perhaps, too firm and self-reliant. Des Ponts's restlessness and anxiety seemed to increase hour by hour. He spent much of his time in Thebes arranging his papers and closing up pending affairs. The flood had now subsided, and a half-drowned slimy life began to move sluggishly through the soft black streets. He alleged to every one urgent business as an excuse for his sudden and unwonted activity. He did not say distinctly where he was going, but spoke sometimes of New Orleans, and oftener of Europe.

"Why will you not go with us?" asked Clarence.

"Later I hope to join you," he would answer, with a smile heart-breaking in the sadness that tried to be gay.

The trunks were packed and sent to the wharf. The bride stood on the veranda dressed for travel, as bright in her blushes and tears as a morning of April. Good Mrs. Marshall, quite melted by her sympathetic happiness, was laughing and crying together, and giving Marie a world of motherly last words.

A red-faced, sleepy-eyed youth came up and asked for Mr. Brydges. "Here's a tallygraft fur him."

Clarence opened the envelope hastily and said, "How unfortunate! Father has started to come to the wedding, and is at St. Louis—says he will leave on this evening's packet. I must send him a telegram to wait there for us."

He wrote the dispatch, and was about handing it to the shabby messenger when Colonel Marshall said, "I will send it to the office by Thomas. I don't think this beery youth is quite awake yet."

"I regret, Mr. Des Ponts," said Clarence, "that you are not to meet my father here. You may be acquaintances, after all. My father lived in Savannah some thirty years ago."

At this moment the steamer rounded the point to the north, and her shrill whistle broke off the conversation. Des Ponts turned ashy pale. His daughter clung to him one instant. There was a confusion of hurried farewells, and the young people drove away to the wharf. In the slanting sunshine of the early morning the clouds of dust raised by their carriage-wheels turned to a rosy halo in which they passed out of sight.

There was a moment of silence. It was broken by Des Ponts, who said, in a husky voice, "Good-by, my old friends. I shall not attempt to thank you enough for your life-long goodness to me and mine."

He took a packet from his paletot and handed it to Colonel Marshall. "This contains my will and one or two other trifles. I am going away for a while—"

"But not immediately?"

"Yes. I can finish to-day the little matters that remain in Thebes. I want to—" He paused, as if in doubt; then continued, in a manner strangely different from his usual one, "I have been tormented all night by impish dreams; and this morning I feel all abroad. I was always rather a lazy man, but the prospect of an absolute *far niente* is by no means alluring. My work in life is done—" Seeing the look

of distress on the face of his friends, he forced a smile and said, "Perhaps I shall learn to enjoy the play-time."

"Yes, we will talk that over at tea," said Mrs. Marshall. "You must certainly stay with us now till your departure."

"Well, well, I will come back to-night."

Then, as he was going to the door, he turned and said, "Colonel, it has been a quarter of a century since I heard Booth, yet all this morning I have been haunted by his tones in the words: 'Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart.' And the other phrase: 'If it be now, 'tis not to come, if it be not to come, it will be now; *if it be not now, yet it will come.*'"

That afternoon Cade Marshall picked up in the library the telegram which Brydges had dropped, and exclaimed,

"Here's a contretemps! This telegram arrived yesterday. That tipsy rascal forgot to deliver it."

"That *is* awkward," said the Colonel. "We can do nothing now but go to the landing for Mr. Brydges and explain the mistake. It is not so bad, after all. He can meet Des Ponts here, and will be sure to like him. Marie and Clarence can pass a day or two pleasantly in St. Louis."

Des Ponts did not return to tea. The steamer was late in coming. All the afternoon the Marshalls watched for it. It was already dark when the Colonel saw the red head-lights shining far down the river. Even while he looked he saw, to his horror, a bright tongue of flame darting from the lower deck and rapidly climbing up the side. It seemed but a moment until the steamer was wrapped in a lurid blaze that blotted out the moonlight and gleamed balefully over the low bottoms to the distant bluffs.

Des Ponts saw it also, midway of the river. He had been detained in Thebes until he was too late for the ferry, and had taken his skiff to row across in the cool fresh night. The fine air and the exercise of rowing kindled his blood, and he threw off the depression that had weighed upon him during the day. Resting on his oars a moment and looking about him, he saw the steamer coming around the bar, and in an instant observed the red jet of fire that spurted from the engine-deck. He turned and rowed to the spot as fast as his strong arms and the swift current could carry him, but before he was there the doomed vessel, all pine and paint and tinder, a most delicate morsel for the fire-fiend, was enveloped in a shroud of flame. The water was filled with struggling and drowning passengers. One of these Des Ponts seized, and, in doing so, dropped an oar. By the time he had lifted the exhausted man into the skiff they had drifted some distance astern of the blazing wreck. Perceiving he had lost an oar, he stood in the stern of his boat to scull back to where others were still struggling. The glare of the conflagration was full in his face. His hat had fallen, and his fine head was brilliantly relieved against the dark like a portrait of Rembrandt.

The man he had saved, lying in the bow, burst into a loud laugh.

Des Ponts felt the blood freezing in his veins. A shudder passed over his frame so powerful that the boat trembled with it. The horror that had dogged him through

life was there, open-mouthed, in his path. But he still held his oar with a grip of iron, and stood as motionless as marble.

"Sam, you're a d _____ d lucky nigger! You have saved your hide forty by picking me up to-night."

Des Ponts trembled again, with the ghost of the old slavish terror that stirred in his soul. He remembered, with horrible humiliation, the story of Herodotus, where the Scythians quelled a triumphant army of slaves by dropping their swords and attacking with their riding-whips. He felt in every fibre of his being that the story was true.

"Come, come, Sam, don't be sulky," said the man in the bow, with a tone meant to be good-natured. "Row me ashore, and leave those rats to swim for it. I sha'n't be hard on you if you behave yourself. How is Clarence?"

"Your son has married my daughter," said Des Ponts.

"Capital!" laughed Brydges. "The girl will come along without any row."

These brutal words recalled Des Ponts to himself. A light which was almost triumph came into his eyes.

"Victor Brydges," he said, firmly and quietly, "I do not wish to play at comedy with you. I am your boy Sam. I have no legal existence, you say; I have no child, no name. Granting this, your son is legally married to the natural daughter of Miss Julia Shelby of Glenarthur."

Brydges saw that this calm statement was incontrovertible. In his sullen rage he fumbled in his waistband, and drawing a dirk, sprang at Des Ponts and struck him in the face. Des Ponts seized and disarmed him, throwing him back heavily into the bow. He tossed the dirk, wet with his own blood, into the river.

"You see how strong I am, and how weak you are, Victor Brydges. If you come at me again I will kill you."

In the slight scuffle he had regained his self-possession. He seated himself on one of the thwarts, facing Brydges. The boat floated with the current. They were nearly out of the glare of the burning boat, but there was light enough to show the firm-set face of Des Ponts, where the streaming blood drew lines of crimson across its ghastly pallor. There was no fear in it now, only the paleness of cool and self-conscious desperation.

"In fifteen minutes," he said, "this current will carry us ashore on Fox Island. We must settle our differences in that time. Unless you come to my terms you shall never leave this boat alive."

"Let's hear your terms," said Brydges.

"Our children are married and happy. Let them alone. I have given my daughter a dowry of one hundred thousand dollars. I will give you the highest market-price for myself. In return, you will bind yourself by oath, in writing, to silence—that is all."

"Sam! I will be candid with you. I think you are lying. You have not so much money. If you have, it is mine already. Consent to break up this marriage, pay me for yourself and the girl, and we will fix it up without scandal. I don't forget we are foster-brothers. You have received much kindness from my family—"

“Stop there! I was brought up with you to serve you. I learned to read, helping you. I learned French to be useful to you when you went abroad. I studied at the University to coach you through. I got my degree, and you failed. When at last I offered to buy myself and remain in France, you cursed me and struck me; and after that you were fool enough to trust me. You made me use my credit at the Prefecture of Police to get you a passport under the name of Des Ponts, to assist you in some scandalous intrigue. I swear that until I had that passport in my hands I never dreamed of running away.”

“It has played the devil with you at last. I should never have found you but for that name in Clarence’s letter.”

“I met and married my wife under that name. I had made it honorable, and could not change it.”

“Well, what do you say to my terms?”

“Victor Brydges,” said Des Ponts, with solemn earnestness, “our children are married and happy. I am ready to die for the good of my daughter, and you must die for the good of your son, unless you accept my offer.”

While he spoke Brydges was looking about him. He saw the boat had drifted so near to the low, willowy island that he could easily swim that distance. He felt himself unequal to another grapple with Des Ponts. His whole soul revolted against making any compromise with his slave. He slid over the boat’s side with the quickness of an otter. Des Ponts started to his feet. “God have mercy on us both!” he murmured, hoarsely. As the head of Brydges came to the surface he plunged into the rapid current, and the foster-brothers went to the bottom locked in each other’s arms.

They were found in the same posture two days later, lying on the shining sand. The Marshalls mourned and buried them side by side. Mrs. Marshall concluded a long and tender letter to Marie with these words:

“My dear children, from their graves your beloved fathers—one of whom lost his precious life in this noble effort to rescue the other from the waves—exhort you continually to love one another.”

The Blood Seedling

In a bit of green pasture that rose, gradually narrowing, to the table-land that ended in prairie, and widened out descending to the wet and willowy sands that border the Great River, a broad-shouldered young man was planting an apple tree one sunny spring morning when Tyler was President. The little valley was shut in on the south and east by rocky hills, patched with the immortal green of cedars and gay with clambering columbines. In front was the Mississippi, reposing from its plunge over the rapids, and idling down among the golden sandbars and the low, moist islands, which were looking their loveliest in their new spring dresses of delicate green.

The young man was digging with a certain vicious energy, forcing the spade into the black crumbling loam with a movement full of vigor and malice. His

straight black brows were knitted till they formed one dark line over his deep-set eyes. His beard was not yet old enough to hide the massive outline of his firm, square jaw. In the set teeth, in the clouded face, in the half-articulate exclamations that shot from time to time from the compressed lips, it was easy to see that the thoughts of the young horticulturist were far from his work.

A bright young girl came down the path through the hazel thicket that skirted the hillside, and putting a plump brown hand on the topmost rail of the fence vaulted lightly over, and lit on the soft springy turf with a thud that announced a wholesome and liberal architecture. It is usually expected of poets and lovers that they shall describe the ladies of their love as so airy and delicate in structure that the flowers they tread on are greatly improved in health and spirits by the visitation. But not being a poet or in love, we must admit that there was no resurrection for the larkspurs and pansies upon which the little boots of Miss Susie Barringer landed. Yet she was not of the coarse peasant type, though her cheeks were so rosy as to cause her great heaviness of heart on Sunday mornings, and her blue lawn dress was as full as it could afford from shoulders to waist. She was a neat, hearty and very pretty country girl, with a slightly freckled face, and rippled brown hair, and astonished blue eyes, but perfectly self-possessed, and graceful as a young quail.

A young man's ears are quick to catch the rustling of a woman's dress. The flight of this plump bird in its fluttering blue plumage over the rail-fence caused her young man to look up from his spading: the scowl was routed from his brow by a sudden incursion of blushes, and his mouth was attacked by an awkward smile.

The young lady nodded, and was hurrying past. The scowl came back in force, and the smile was repulsed from the bearded mouth with great loss: "Miss Tудie, are you in a hurry?"

The lady thus addressed turned and said, in a voice that was half pert and half coaxing, "No particular hurry. Al, I've told you a dozen times not to call me that redicklis name."

"Why, Tудie, I hain't never called you nothing else sence you was a little one so high. You ort to know yer own name, and you give yerself that name when you was a yearling. Howsomever, ef you don't like it now, sence you've been to Jacksonville, I reckon I can call you Miss Susie—when I don't disremember."

The frank amende seemed to satisfy Miss Susie, for she at once interrupted in the kindest manner: "Never mind, Al Golyer: you can call me what you are a-mind to." Then, as if conscious of the feminine inconsistency, she changed the subject by asking, "What are you going to do with that great hole?—big enough to bury a fellow."

"I'm going to plant this here seedlin', that growed up in Colonel Blood's pasture, nobody knows how: belike somebody was eatin' an apple and throwed the core down-like. I'm going to plant a little orchard here next spring, but the colonel and me, we reckoned this one 'ud be too old by that time for moving, so I thought I'd stick it in now, and see what come out'n it. It's a powerful thrifty chunk of

a saplin'."

"Yes. I speak for the first peck of apples off'n it. Don't forget. Good-morning."

"Hold on a minute, Miss Susan, twell I git my coat. I'll walk down a piece with you. I have got something to say to you."

Miss Susie turned a little red and a little pale. These occasions were not entirely unknown in her short experience of life. When young men in the country in that primitive period had something to say, it was something very serious and earnest. Allen Golyer was a good-looking, stalwart young farmer, well-to-do, honest, able to provide for a family. There was nothing presumptuous in his aspiring to the hand of the prettiest girl on Chaney Creek. In childhood he had trotted her to Banbury Cross and back a hundred times, beguiling the tedium of the journey with kisses and the music of bells. When the little girl was old enough to go to school, the big boy carried her books and gave her the rosiest apple out of his dinner-basket. He fought all her battles and wrote all her compositions; which latter, by the way, never gained her any great credit. When she was fifteen and he twenty he had his great reward in taking her twice a week during one happy winter to singing-school. This was the bloom of life—nothing before or after could compare with it. The blacking of shoes and brushing of stiff, electric, bristling hair, all on end with frost and hope, the struggling into the plate-armor of his starched shirt, the tying of the portentous and uncontrollable cravat before the glass, which was hopelessly dimmed every moment by his eager breath,—these trivial and vulgar details were made beautiful and unreal by the magic of youth and love. Then came the walk through the crisp, dry snow to the Widow Barringer's, the sheepish talk with the old lady while Susie "got on her things," and the long, enchanting tramp to the "deestrick school-house."

There is not a country-bred man or woman now living but will tell you that life can offer nothing comparable with the innocent zest of that old style of courting that was done at singing-school in the starlight and candlelight of the first half of our century. There are few hearts so withered and old but they beat quicker sometimes when they hear, in old-fashioned churches, the wailing, sobbing or exulting strains of "Bradstreet" or "China" or "Coronation"; and the mind floats down on the current of these old melodies to that fresh young day of hopes and illusions—of voices that were sweet, no matter how false they sang—of nights that were rosy with dreams, no matter what Fahrenheit said—of girls that blushed without cause, and of lovers who talked for hours about everything but love.

I know I shall excite the scorn of all the ingenuous youth of my time when I say that there was nothing that our superior civilization would call love-making in those long walks through the winter nights. The heart of Allen Golyer swelled under his satin waistcoat with love and joy and devotion as he walked over the crunching roads with his pretty enslaver. But he talked of applies and pigs and the heathen and the teacher's wig, and sometimes ventured an allusion to other people's flirtations in a jocosé and distant way; but as to the state of his own heart, his lips were sealed. It would move a blasé smile on the downy lips of juvenile

Lovelaces, who count their conquests by their cotillions, and think nothing of making a declaration in an *avant-deux*, to be told of young people spending several evenings of each week in the year together, and speaking no word of love until they were ready to name their wedding-day. Yet such was the sober habit of the place and time.

So there was no troth plighted between Allen and Susie, though the youth loved the maiden with all the energy of his fresh, unused nature, and she knew it very well. He never dreamed of marrying any other woman than Susie Barringer, and she sometimes tried a new pen by writing and carefully erasing the initials S. M. G., which, as she was christened Susan Minerva, may be taken as showing the direction of her thoughts.

If Allen Golyer had been less bashful or more enterprising, this history would never have been written; for Susie would probably have said Yes for want of anything better to say, and when she went to visit her aunt Abigail in Jacksonville she would have gone *engaged*, her finger bound with gold and her maiden meditations fettered by promises. But she went, as it was, fancy free, and there is no tinder so inflammable as the imagination of a pretty country girl of sixteen.

One day she went out with her easy-going aunt Abigail to buy ribbons, the Chaney Creek invoices not supplying the requirements of Jacksonville society. As they traversed the court-house square on their way to Deacon Pettybones' place, Miss Susie's vagrant glances rested on an iris of ribbons displayed in an opposition window. "Let's go in here," she said with the impetuous decision of her age and sex.

"We will go where you like, dear," said easy-going Aunt Abigail. "It makes no difference."

Aunt Abigail was wrong. It made the greatest difference to several persons whether Susie Barringer bought her ribbons at Simmons' or Pettybones' that day. If she had but known!

But, all unconscious of the Fate that beckoned invisibly on the threshold, Miss Susie tripped into "Simmons' Emporium" and asked for ribbons. Two young men stood at the long counter. One was Mr. Simmons, proprietor of the emporium, who advanced with his most conscientious smile: "Ribbons, ma'am? Yes, ma'am—all sorts, ma'am. Cherry, ma'am? Certingly, ma'am. Jest got a splendid lot from St. Louis this morning, ma'am. This way, ma'am."

The ladies were soon lost in the delight of the eyes. The voice of Mr. Simmons accompanied the feast of color, insinuating but unheeded.

The other young man approached: "Here is what you want, miss—rich and elegant. Just suits your style. Sets off your hair and eyes beautiful."

The ladies looked up. A more decided voice than Mr. Simmons'; whiter hands than Mr. Simmons' handled the silken bands; bolder eyes than the weak, pink-bordered orbs of Mr. Simmons looked unabashed admiration into the pretty face of Susie Barringer.

"Look here, Simmons, old boy, introduce a fellow."

Mr. Simmons meekly obeyed: "Mrs. Barringer, let me interduce you to Mr.

Leon of St. Louis, of the house of Draper & Mercer."

"Bertie Leon, at your service," said the brisk young fellow, seizing Miss Susie's hand with energy. His hand was so much softer and whiter than hers that she felt quite hot and angry about it.

When they had made their purchases, Mr. Leon insisted on walking home with them, and was very witty and agreeable all the way. He had all the wit of the newspapers, of the concert-rooms, of the steamboat bars at his fingers' ends. In his wandering life he had met all kinds of people: he had sold ribbons through a dozen States. He never had a moment's doubt of himself. He never hesitated to allow himself any indulgence which would not interfere with business. He had one ambition in life—to marry Miss Mercer and get a share in the house. Miss Mercer was as ugly as a millionaire's tombstone. Mr. Bertie Leon—who, when his moustache was not dyed nor his hair greased, was really quite a handsome fellow—considered that the sacrifice he proposed to make in the interests of trade must be made good to him in some way. So, "by way of getting even," he made violent love to all the pretty eyes he met in his commercial travels—"to have something to think about after he should have found favor in the strabismic optics of Miss Mercer," he observed, disrespectfully.

Simple Susie, who had seen nothing of young men besides the awkward and blushing clodhoppers of Chaney Creek, was somewhat dazzled by the free-and-easy speech and manner of the hard-cheeked bagman. Yet there was something in his airy talk and point-blank compliments that aroused a faint feeling of resentment which she could scarcely account for. Aunt Abigail was delighted with him, and when he bowed his adieux at the gate in the most recent Planters'-House style, she cordially invited him to call— "to drop in any time: he must be lonesome so fur from home."

He said he wouldn't neglect such a chance, with another Planters'-House bow. "What a nice young man!" said Aunt Abigail.

"Awful conceited and not overly polite," said Susie as she took off her bonnet and went into a revel of bows and trimmings.

The oftener Albert Leon came to Mrs. Barringer's bowery cottage, the more the old lady was pleased with him and the more the young one criticised him, until it was plain to be seen that Aunt Abigail was growing tired of him and pretty Susan dangerously interested. But just at this point his inexorable carpet-bag dragged him off to a neighboring town, and Susie soon afterward went back to Chaney Creek.

Her Jacksonville hat and ribbons made her what her pretty eyes never could have done—the belle of the neighborhood. Non cuivis contingit adire Lutetiam, but to a village where no one has been at Paris the county-town is a shrine of fashion. Allen Golyer felt a vague sense of distrust chilling his heart as he saw Mr. Simmons' ribbons decking the pretty head in the village choir the Sunday after her return, and, spurred on by a nascent jealousy of the unknown, resolved to learn his fate without loss of time. But the little lady received him with such cool and unconcerned friendliness, talked so much and so fast about her visit, that the hon-

est fellow was quite bewildered, and had to go home to think the matter over, and cudgel his dull wits to divine whether she was pleasanter than ever, or had drifted altogether out of his reach.

Allen Golyer was, after all, a man of nerve and decision. He wasted only a day or two in doubts and fears, and one Sunday afternoon, with a beating but resolute heart, he left his Sunday-school class to walk down to Crystal Glen and solve his questions and learn his doom. When he came in sight of the widow's modest house, he saw a buggy hitched by the gate.

"Dow Padgett's chestnut sorrel, by jing! What is Dow after out here?"

It is natural, if not logical, that young men should regard the visits of all other persons of their age and sex in certain quarters as a serious impropriety.

But it was not his friend and crony Dow Padgett, the liveryman, who came out of the widow's door, leading by the hand the blushing and bridling Susie. It was a startling apparition of the South-western dandy of the period—light hair drenched with bear's oil, blue eyes and jet-black moustache, an enormous paste brooch in his bosom, a waistcoat and trowsers that shrieked in discordant tones, and very small and elegant varnished boots. The gamblers and bagmen of the Mississippi River are the best-shod men in the world.

Golyer's heart sank within him as this splendid being shone upon him. But with his rustic directness he walked to meet the laughing couple at the gate, and said, "Tudie, I come to see you. Shall I go in and talk to your mother twell you come back?"

"No, that won't pay," promptly replied the brisk stranger. "We will be gone the heft of the afternoon, I reckon. This hoss is awful slow," he added with a wink of preternatural mystery to Miss Susie.

"Mr. Golyer," said the young lady, "let me interduce you to my friend, Mr. Leon."

Golyer put out his hand mechanically, after the cordial fashion of the West. But Leon nodded and said, "I hope to see you again." He lifted Miss Susie into the buggy, sprang lightly in, and went off with laughter and the cracking of his whip after Dow Padgett's chestnut sorrel.

The young farmer walked home desolate, comparing in his simple mind his own plain exterior with his rival's gorgeous toilet, his awkward address with the other's easy audacity, till his heart was full to the brim with that infernal compound of love and hate which is called jealousy, from which pray Heaven to guard you.

It was the next morning that Miss Susie vaulted over the fence where Allen Golyer was digging the hole for Colonel Blood's apple tree.

"Something middlin' particular," continued Golyer, resolutely.

"There is no use leaving your work," said Miss Barringer pluckily. "I will stay and listen."

Poor Allen began as badly as possible: "Who was that feller with you yesterday?"

“Thank you, Mr. Golyer—my friends ain’t fellers! What’s that to you, who he was?”

“Susie Barringer, we have been keeping company now a matter of a year. I have loved you well and true: I would have give my life to save you any little care or trouble. I never dreamed of nobody but you—not that I was half good enough for you, but because I did not know any better man around here. Ef it ain’t too late, Susie, I ask you to be my wife. I will love you and care for you, good and true.”

Before this solemn little speech was finished, Susie was crying and biting her bonnet-strings in a most undignified manner. “Hush, Al Golyer!” she burst out, “You mustn’t talk so. You are too good for me. I am kind of promised to that fellow. I ’most wish I had never seen him.”

Allen sprang to her and took her in his strong arms: she struggled free from him. In a moment the vibration which his passionate speech had produced in her passed away. She dried her eyes and said firmly enough, “It’s no use, Al: we wouldn’t be happy together. Good-bye! I shouldn’t wonder if I went away from Chaney Creek before long.”

She walked rapidly down to the river-road. Allen stood fixed and motionless, gazing at the light, graceful form until the blue dress vanished behind the hill, and leaned long on his spade, unconscious of the lapse of time.

When Susan reached her home she found Leon at the gate.

“Ah, my little rosebud! I came near missing you. I am going to Keokuk this morning, to be gone a few days. I stopped here a minute to give you something to keep for me till I come back.”

“What is it?”

He took her chubby cheeks between his hands and laid on her cherry-ripe lips a keepsake which he never reclaimed.

She stood watching him from the gate until, as a clump of willows snatched him from her, she thought, “He will go right by where Al is at work. It would be jest like him to jump over the fence and have a talk with him. I’d like to hear it.”

An hour or so later, as she sat and sewed in the airy little entry, a shadow fell upon her work, and as she looked up her startled eyes met the piercing glance of her discarded lover. A momentary ripple of remorse passed over her cheerful heart as she saw Allen’s pale and agitated face. He was paler than she had ever seen him, with that ghastly pallor of weather-beaten faces. His black hair, wet with perspiration, clung clammily to his temples. He looked beaten, discouraged, utterly fatigued with the conflict of emotion. But one who looked closely in his eyes would have seen a curious stealthy, half-shaded light in them, as of one who, though working against hope, was still not without resolute will.

Dame Barringer, who had seen him coming up the walk, bustled in: “Good-morning, Allen. How beat out you do look! Now, I like a stiddy young man, but don’t you think you run this thing of workin’ into the ground?”

“Wall, maybe so,” said Golyer with a weary smile—“leastways I’ve been a-

running this spade into the ground all the morning, and—"

"*You want buttermilk—that's your idee; ain't it, now?*"

"Well, Mizzes Barringer, I reckon you know my failin's."

The good woman trotted off to the dairy, and Susie sewed demurely, waiting with some trepidation for what was to come next.

"Susie Barringer," said a low, husky voice which she could scarcely recognize as Golyer's, "I've come to ask pardon—not for nothing I've done, for I never did and never could do you wrong—but for what I thought for a while arter you left me this morning. It's all over now, but I tell *you* the Bad Man had his claws into my heart for a spell. Now it's all over, and I wish you well. I wish your husband well. If ever you git into any trouble where I can help, send for me: it's my right. It's the last favor I ask of you."

Susceptible Susie cried a little again. Allen, watching her with his ambushed eyes, said, "Don't take it to heart, Tудie. Perhaps there is better days in store for me yet."

This did not appear to comfort Miss Barringer in the least. She was greatly grieved when she thought she had broken a young man's heart: she was still more dismal at the slightest intimation that she had not. If any explanation of this paradox is required, I would observe, quoting a phrase much in vogue among the witty writers of the present age, that Miss Susie Barringer was "a very female woman."

So pretty Susan's rising sob subsided into a coquettish pout by the time her mother came in with the foaming pitcher of subacidulous nectar, and plied young Golyer with brimming beakers of it with all the benificent delight of a Lady Bountiful.

"There, Mizzes Barringer! there's about as much as I can tote. Temperance in all things."

"Very well, then, you work less and play more. We never get a sight of you lately. Come in neighborly and play checkers with Tудie."

It was the darling wish of Mother Barringer's heart to see her daughter married and settled with "a stiddy young man that you knowed all about, and his folks before him." She had observed with great disquietude and brilliant avatar of Mr. Bertie Leon and the evident pride of her daughter in the bright-plumaged captive she had brought to Chaney Creek, the spoil of her maiden snare. "I don't more'n half like that little feller." (It is a Western habit to call a well-dressed man a "little feller." The epithet would light on Hercules Farnese if he should go to Illinois dressed as a Cocodès.) "No honest folks wears beard onto their upper lips. I wouldn't be surprised if he wasn't a gamboller."

Allen Golyer, apparently unconscious in his fatigue of the cap which Dame Barringer was vicariously setting for him, walked away with his spade on his shoulder, and the good woman went systematically to work in making Susie miserable by sharp little country criticisms of her heart's idol.

Day after day wore on, and, to Dame Barringer's delight and Susie's dismay, Mr. Leon did not come.

"He is such a business-man," thought trusting Susan, "he can't get away from Keokuk. But he'll be sure to write." So Susie put on her sun-bonnet and hurried up to the post-office: "Any letters for me, Mr. Whaler?" The artful and indefinite plural was not disguise enough for Miss Susie, so she added, "I was expecting a letter from my aunt."

"No letters here from your aunt, nor your uncle, nor none of the tribe," said old Whaler, who had gone over with Tyler to keep his place, and so had no further use for good manners.

"I think old Tommy Whaler is an impident old wretch," said Susie that evening, "and I won't go near his old post-office again." But Susie forgot her threat of vengeance the next day, and she went again, lured by family affection, to inquire for that letter which Aunt Abbie *must* have written. The third time she went, rummy old Whaler roared very improperly, "Bother your aunt! You've got a beau somewhere—that's what's the matter."

Poor Susan was so dazzled by this flash of clairvoyance that she hurried from that dreadful post-office, scarcely hearing the terrible words that the old gin-pig hurled after her: "*And he's forgot you!—that's what's the matter.*"

Susie Barringer walked home along the river-road, revolving many things in her mind. She went to her room and locked her door by sticking a penknife over the latch, and sat down to have a good cry. Her faculties being thus cleared for action, she thought seriously for an hour. If you can remember when you were a school-girl, you know a great deal of solid thinking can be done in an hour. But we can tell you in a moment what it footed up. You can walk through the Louvre in a minute, but you cannot see it in a week.

Susan Barringer (sola, loquitur): "Three weeks yesterday. Yes, I s'pose it's so. What a little fool I was! He goes everywhere—says the same things to everybody, like he was selling ribbons. Mean little scamp! Mother seen through him in a minute. I'm mighty glad I didn't tell her nothing about it." [Fie, Susie! your principles are worse than your grammar.] "He'll marry some rich girl—I don't envy her, but I hate her—and I am as good as she is. Maybe he will come back—no, and I hope he won't;—and I wish I was dead!" (*Pocket handkerchief.*)

Yet in the midst of her grief there was one comforting thought—nobody knew of it. She had no confidante—she had not even opened her heart to her mother: these Western maidens have a fine gift of reticence. A few of her countryside friends and rivals had seen with envy and admiration the pretty couple on the day of Leon's arrival. But all their poisonous little compliments and questions had never elicited from the prudent Susie more than the safe statement that the handsome stranger was a friend of Aunt Abbie's, whom she had met at Jacksonville. They could not laugh at her: they could not sneer at gay deceivers and lovelorn damsels when she went to the sewing-circle. The bitterness of her tears was greatly sweetened by the consideration that in any case no one could pity her. She took such consolation from this thought that she faced her mother unflinchingly at tea, and baffled the maternal inquest on her "redness of eyes" by the schoolgirl's invaluable and ever-ready headache.

It was positively not until a week later, when she met Allen Golyer at choir-meeting, that she remembered that this man knew the secret of her baffled hopes. She blushed scarlet as he approached her: "Have you got company home, Miss Susie?"

"Yes—that is, Sally Withers and me came together, and—"

"No, that's hardly fair to Tom Fleming: three ain't the pleasantest company. I will go home with you."

Susie took the strong arm that was held out to her, and leaned upon it with a mingled feeling of confidence and dread as they walked home through the balmy night under the clear, starry heaven of the early spring. The air was full of the quickening breath of May.

Susie Barringer waited in vain for some signal of battle from Allen Golyer. He talked more than usual, but in a grave, quiet, protecting style, very different from his former manner of worshiping bashfulness. His tone had in it an air of fatherly caressing which was inexpressibly soothing to his pretty companion, tired and lonely with her silent struggle of the past month. When they came to her gate and he said good-night, she held his hand a moment with a tremulous grasp, and spoke impulsively: "Al, I once told you something I never told anybody else. I'll tell you something else now, because I believe I can trust you."

"Be sure of that, Susie Barringer."

"Well, Al, my engagement is broken off."

"I am sorry for you, Susie, if you set much store by him."

Miss Susie answered with great and unnecessary impetuosity, "I don't, and I am glad of it!" and then ran into the house and to bed, her cheeks all aflame at the thought of her indiscretion, and yet with a certain comfort in having a friend from whom she had no secrets.

I protest there was no thought of coquetry in the declaration which Susan Barringer blurted out to her old lover under the sympathetic starlight of the May heaven. But Allen Golyer would have been a dull boy not to have taken heart and hope from it. He became, as of old, a frequent and welcome visitor at Crystal Glen. Before long the game of chequers with Susie became so enthralling a passion that it was only adjourned from one evening to another. Allen's white shirts grew fringy at the edges with fatigue-duty, and his large hands were furry at the fingers with much soap. Susie's affectionate heart, which had been swayed a moment from its orbit by the irresistible attraction of Bertie Leon's diamond breastpin and city swagger, swung back to its ancient course under the mild influence of time and the weather and opportunity. So that Dame Barringer was not in the least surprised, on entering her little parlor one soft afternoon in that very May, to see the two young people economically occupying one chair, and Susie shouting the useless appeal, "Mother, make him behave!"

"I never interfere in young folks' matters, especially when they're going all right," said the motherly old soul, kissing "her son Allen" and trotting away to dry her happy tears.

I am almost ashamed to say how soon they were married—so soon that when

Miss Susan went with her mother to Keokuk to buy a wedding-garment, she half expected to find, in every shop she entered, the elegant figure of Mr. Leon leaning over the counter. But the dress was bought and made, and worn at wedding and *in-fair* and in a round of family visits among the Barringer and Golyer kin, and carefully laid away in lavender when the pair came back from their modest holiday and settled down to real life on Allen's prosperous farm; and no word of Bertie Leon ever came to Mrs. Golyer to trouble her joy. In her calm and busy life the very name faded from her tranquil mind. These wholesome country hearts do not bleed long. In that wide-awake country eyes are too useful to be wasted in weeping. My dear Lothario Urbanus, those peaches are very sound and delicious, but they will not keep for ever. If you do not secure them to-day, they will go to some one else, and in no case, as the Autocrat hath said with authority, can you stand there "mellering 'em with your thumb."

There was no happier home in the county, and few finer farms. The good sense and industry of Golyer and the practical helpfulness of his wife found their full exercise in the care of his spreading fields and growing orchards. The Warsaw merchants fought for his wheat, and his apples were known in St. Louis. Mrs. Golyer, with that spice of romance which is hidden away in every woman's heart, had taken a special fancy to the seedling apple tree at whose planting she had so intimately assisted. Allen shared in this, as in all her whims, and tended and nursed it like a child. In time he gave up the care of his orchard to other hands, but he reserved this seedling for his own especial coddling. He spaded and mulched and pruned it, and guarded it in the winter from rodent rabbits and in summer from terebrant grubs. It was not ungrateful. It grew a noble tree, producing a rich and luscious fruit, with a deep scarlet satin coat, and a flesh tinged as delicately as a pink sea-shell. The first peck of apples was given to Susie with great ceremony, and the next year the first bushel was carried to Colonel Blood, the Congressman. He was loud in his admiration, as the autumn elections were coming on: "Great Scott, Golyer! I'd rather give my name to a horticultooral triumph like that there than be Senator."

"You've got your wish, then, colonel," said Golyer. "Me and my wife have called that tree The Blood Seedling sence the day it was transplanted from your pastur'."

It was the pride and envy of the neighborhood. Several neighbors asked for scions and grafts, but could do nothing with them.

"Fact is," said old Silas Withers, "those folks that expects to raise good fruit by begging graffs, and then layin' abed and readin' newspapers, will have a good time waitin'. Elbow-grease is the secret of the Blood Seedlin', ain't it, Al?"

"Well, I reckon, Squire Withers, a man never gits anything wuth havin' without a tussle for it; and as to secrets, I don't believe in them, nohow."

A square-browed, resolute, silent, middle-aged man, who loved his home better than any amusement, regular at church, at the polls, something richer every Christmas than he had been on the New Year's preceding—a man whom everybody liked and few loved much—such had Allen Golyer grown to be.

If I have lingered too long over this colorless and commonplace picture of rural Western life, it is because I have felt an instinctive reluctance to recount the startling and most improbable incident which fell one night upon this quiet neighborhood, like a thunderbolt out of blue sky. The story I must tell will be flatly denied and easily refuted. It is absurd and fantastic, but, unless human evidence is to go for nothing when it testifies of things unusual, the story is true.

At the head of the rocky hollow through which Chaney Creek ran to the river, lived the family who gave the brook its name. They were among the early pioneers of the county. In the squatty yellow stone house the present Chaney occupied his grandfather had stood a siege from Black Hawk all one summer day and night, until relieved by the garrison of Fort Edward. The family had not grown with the growth of the land. Like many others of the pioneers, they had shown no talent for keeping abreast of the civilization whose guides and skirmishers they had been. In the progress of a half century they had sold, bit by bit, their section of land, which kept intact would have proved a fortune. They lived very quietly, working enough to secure their own pork and hominy, and regarding with a sort of impatient scorn every scheme of public or private enterprise that passed under their eyes.

The elder Chaney had married, some years before, at the Mormon town of Nauvoo, the fair-haired daughter of a Swedish mystic, who had come across the sea beguiled by dreams of a perfect theocracy, and who on arriving at the city of the Latter-Day Saints had died, broken-hearted from his lost illusions.

The only dowry that Seraphita Neilsen brought her husband, besides her delicate beauty and her wide blue eyes, was a full set of Swedenborg's later writings in English. These became the daily food of the solitary household. Saul Chaney would read the exalted rhapsodies of the Northern seer for hours together, without the first glimmer of their meaning crossing his brain. But there was something in the majesty of their language and the solemn roll of their poetical development that irresistibly impressed and attracted him. Little Gershom, his only child, sitting at his feet, would listen in childish wonder to the strange things his silent, morose and gloomy father found in the well-worn volumes, until his tired eyelids would fall at last over his pale, bulging eyes.

As he grew up his eyes bulged more and more: his head seemed too large for his rickety body. He pored over the marvelous volumes until he knew long passages by heart, and understood less of them than his father—which was unnecessary. He looked a little like his mother, but while she in her youth had something of the faint and flickering beauty of the Boreal Lights, poor Gershom never could have suggested anything more heavenly than a foggy moonlight. When he was fifteen he went to the neighboring town of Warsaw to school. He had rather heavy weather among the well-knit, grubby-knuckled urchins of the town, and would have been thoroughly disheartened but for one happy chance. At the house where he boarded an amusement called the "Sperrit Rappin's" was much in vogue. A group of young folks, surcharged with all sorts of animal magnetism, with some

capacity for belief and much more for fun, used to gather about a light pine table every evening, and put it through a complicated course of mystical gymnastics. It was a very good-tempered table: it would dance, hop or slam at the word of command, or, if the exercises took a more intellectual turn, it would answer any questions addressed to it in a manner not much below the average capacity of its tormentors.

Gershom Chaney took all this in solemn earnest. He was from the first moment deeply impressed. He lay awake whole nights, with his eyes fast closed, in the wildest dreams. His school-hours were passed in trancelike contemplation. He cared no more for punishment than the fakeer for his self-inflicted tortures. He longed for the coming of the day when he could commune in solitude with the unfleshed and immortal. This was the full flowering of those seeds of fantasy that had fallen into his infant mind as he lay baking his brains by the wide fire in the old stone house at the head of the hollow, while his father read, haltingly, of the wonders of the invisible world.

But, to his great mortification, he saw nothing, heard nothing, experienced nothing but in the company of others. He must brave the ridicule of the profane to taste the raptures which his soul loved. His simple, trusting faith made him inevitably the butt of the mischievous circle. They were not slow in discovering his extreme sensibility to external influences. One muscular, black-haired, heavy-browed youth took especial delight in practicing upon him. The table, under Gershom's tremulous hands, would skip like a lamb at the command of this Thomas Fay.

One evening, Tom Fay had a great triumph. They had been trying to get the "medium"—for Gershom had reached that dignity—to answer sealed questions, and had met with indifferent success. Fay suddenly approached the table, scribbled a phrase, folded it and tossed it, doubled up, before Gershom; then leaned over the table, staring at his pale, unwholesome face with all the might of his black eyes.

Chaney seized the pencil convulsively and wrote, "Balaam!"

Fay burst into a loud laugh and said, "Read the question?"

It was, "Who rode on your grandfather's back?"

This is a specimen of the cheap wit and harmless malice by which poor Gershom suffered as long as he stayed at school. He was never offended, but was often sorely perplexed, at the apparent treachery of his unseen counselors. He was dismissed at last from the academy for utter and incorrigible indolence. He accepted his disgrace as a crown of martyrdom, and went proudly home to his sympathizing parents.

Here, with less criticism and more perfect faith, he renewed the exercise of what he considered his mysterious powers. His fastings and vigils, and want of bodily movement and fresh air, had so injured his health as to make him tenfold more nervous and sensitive than ever. But his faintings and hysterics and epileptic paroxysms were taken more and more as evidences of his lofty mission. His father and mother regarded him as an oracle, for the simple reason that he always an-

swered just as they expected. A curious or superstitious neighbor was added from time to time to the circle, and their reports heightened the half-uncanny interest with which the Chaney house was regarded.

It was on a moist and steamy evening of spring that Allen Golyer, standing by his gate, saw Saul Chaney slouching along in the twilight, and hailed him: "What news from the sperrits, Saul?"

"Nothing for you, Al Golyer," said Saul, gloomily. "The god of this world takes care of the like o' you."

Golyer smiled, as a prosperous man always does when his poorer neighbors abuse him for this luck, and rejoined: "I ain't so fortunate as you think for, Saul Chaney. I lost a Barksher pig yesterday; I reckon I must come up and ask Gershom what's come of it."

"Come along, if you like. It's been a long while sence you've crossed my sill. But I'm gitting to be quite the style. Young Lawyer Marshall is a-coming up this evening to see my Gershom."

Before Mr. Golyer started he filled a basket, "to make himself welcome and pay for the show," with the reddest and finest fruit of his favorite apple tree. His wife followed him to the gate and kissed him—a rather unusual attention among Western farmer-people. Her face, still rosy and comely, was flushed and smiling: "Al, do you know what day o' the year it is?"

"Nineteenth of Aprile?"

"Yes; and twenty years ago to-day you planted the Blood Seedlin' and I give you the mitten!" She turned and went into the house, laughing comfortably.

Allen walked slowly up the hollow to the Chaney house, and gave the apples to Seraphita and told her their story. A little company was assembled—two or three Chaney Creek people, small market-gardeners, with eyes the color of their gooseberries and hands the color of their currants; Mr. Marshall, a briefless young barrister from Warsaw, with a tawny friend, who spoke like a Spaniard.

"Take seats, friends, and form a circle o' harmony," said Saul Chaney. "The me'jum is in fine condition; he had two fits this artemnoon."

Gershom looked shockingly ill and weak. He reclined in a great hickory arm-chair, with his eyes half open, his lips moving noiselessly. All the persons present formed a circle and joined hands.

The moment the circle was completed by Saul and Seraphita, who were on either side of their son, touching his hands, an expression of pain and perplexity passed over his pale face, and he began to writhe and mutter.

"He's seein' visions," said Saul.

"Yes, too many of 'em," said Gershom, querulously. "A boy in a boat, a man on a shelf, and a man with a spade—all at once; too many. Get me a pencil. One at a time, I tell you—one at a time!"

The circle broke up, and a table was brought, with writing materials. Gershom grasped a pencil, and said, with imperious and feverish impatience, "Come on, now, and don't waste the time of the shining ones."

An old woman took his right hand. He wrote with his left very rapidly an in-

stant, and threw her the paper, always with his eyes shut close.

Old Mrs. Scritcher read with difficulty, "A boy in a boat—over he goes"; and burst out in a piteous wail, "Oh, my poor little Ephraim! I always knewed it."

"Silence, woman!" said the relentless medium.

"Mr. Marshall," said Saul, "would you like a test?"

"No, thank you," said the young gentleman. "I brought my friend, Mr. Baldassano, who, as a traveler, is interested in these things."

"Will you take the medium's hand, Mr. What's-your-name?"

The young foreigner took the lean and feverish hand of Gershom, and again the pencil flew rapidly over the paper. He pushed the manuscript from him and snatched his hand away from Baldassano. As the latter looked at what was written, his tawny cheek grew deadly pale. "Dios mio!" he exclaimed to Marshall. "This is written in Castilian!"

The two young men retired to the other end of the room and read by the tallow candle the notes scrawled on the paper. Baldassano translated: "A man on a shelf—table covered with bottles beside him: man's face yellow as gold: bottles tumble without being touched."

"What nonsense is that?" said Marshall.

"My brother died of yellow fever at sea last year."

Both the young men became suddenly very thoughtful, and observed with great interest the result of Golyer's "test." He sat by Gershom, holding his hand tightly, but gazing absently into the dying blaze of the wide chimney. He seemed to have forgotten where he was: a train of serious thought appeared to hold him completely under its control. His brows were knit with an expression of severe almost fierce determination. At one moment his breathing was hard and thick—a moment after hurried and broken.

All this while the fingers of Gershom were flying rapidly over the paper, independently of his eyes, which were sometimes closed, and sometimes rolling as if in trouble.

A wind which had been gathering all the evening now came moaning up the hollow, rattling the window-blinds, and twisting into dull complaint the boughs of the leafless trees. Its voice came chill and cheerless into the dusky room, where the fire was now glimmering near its death, and the only sounds were those of Gershom's rushing pencil, the whispering of Marshall and his friend, and old Mother Scritcher feebly whimpering in her corner. The scene was sinister. Suddenly, a rushing gust blew the door wide open.

Golyer started to his feet, trembling in every limb, and looking furtively over his shoulder out into the night. Quickly recovering himself, he turned to resume his place. But the moment he dropped Gershom's hand, the medium had dropped his pencil, and had sunk back in his chair in a deep and deathlike slumber. Golyer seized the sheet of paper, and with the first line that he read a strange and horrible transformation was wrought in the man. His eyes protruded, his teeth chattered, he passed his hand over his head mechanically, and his hair stood up like the bristles on the back of a swine in rage. His face was blotched white and purple. He

looked piteously about him for a moment, then crumpling the paper in his hand, cried out in a hoarse, choking voice, "Yes, it's a fact: I done it. It's no use denying on't. Here it is, in black and white. Everybody knows it: ghosts come spooking around to tattle about it. What's the use of lying? I done it."

He paused, as if struck by a sudden recollection, then burst into tears and shook like a tree in a high wind. In a moment he dropped on his knees, and in that posture crawled over to Marshall: "Here, Mr. Marshall—here's the whole story. For God's sake, spare my wife and children all you can. Fix my little property all right for 'em, and God bless you for it!" Even while he was speaking, with a quick revulsion of feeling he rose to his feet, with a certain return of his natural dignity, and said, "But they sha'n't take me! None of my kin ever died that way: I've got too much sand in my gizzard to be took that way. Good-bye, friends all!"

He walked deliberately out into the wild, windy night.

Marshall glanced hurriedly at the fatal paper in his hand. It was full of that capricious detail with which in reverie we review scenes that are past. But a line here and there clearly enough told the story—how he went out to plant the apple tree; how Susie came by and rejected him; how he passed into the power of the devil for the time; how Bertie Leon came by and spoke to him, and patted him on the shoulder, and talked about city life; how he hated him and his pretty face and his good clothes; how they came to words and blows, and he struck him with his spade, and he fell into the trench, and he buried him there at the roots of the tree.

Marshall, following his first impulse, thrust the paper into the dull red coals. It flamed for an instant, and flew with a sound like a sob up the chimney.

They hunted for Golyer all night, but in the morning found him lying as if asleep, with the peace of expiation on his pale face, his pruning-knife in his heart, and the red current of his life tinging the turf with crimson around the roots of the Blood Seedling.

3

Ballads

Jim Bludso

WALL, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you have n't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He were n't no saint,—them engineers
Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had,—
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,—
A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *would n't* be passed.
And so she come tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar.

And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right,
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He were n't no saint,—but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That would n't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

Banty Tim

(REMARKS OF SERGEANT TILMON JOY TO THE
WHITE MAN'S COMMITTEE OF SPUNKY POINT, ILLINOIS.)

I RECKON I git your drift, gents,—
You 'low the boy sha' n't stay;
This is a white man's country;
You're Dimocrats, you say;
And whereas, and seein', and wherefore,
The times bein' all out o' j'int,
The nigger has got to mosey
From the limits o' Spunky P'int!

Le's reason the thing a minute:
I'm an old-fashioned Dimocrat too,
Though I laid my politics out o' the way
For to keep till the war was through,
But I come back here, allowin'
To vote as I used to do,
Though it gravels me like the devil to train
Along o' sich fools as you.

Now dog my cats ef I kin see,
In all the light of the day,
What you've got to do with the question
Ef Tim shill go or stay,
And funder than that I give notice,
Ef one of you tetches the boy,
He kin check his trunks to a warmer clime
Than he'll find in Illanoy.

Why, blame your hearts, jest hear me!
You know that ungodly day
When our left struck Vicksburg Heights, how ripped
And torn and tattered we lay,
When the rest retreated I stayed behind,
Fur reasons sufficient to me,—
With a rib caved in, and a leg on a strike,
I sprawled on that cursed glacee.

Lord! how the hot sun went for us,
And br'iled and blistered and burned!
How the Rebel bullets whizzed round us

When a cuss in his death-grip turned!
Till along toward dusk I seen a thing
I could n't believe for a spell:
That nigger – that Tim – was a crawlin' to me
Through that fire-proof, gilt-edged hell!

The Rebels seen him as quick as me,
And the bullets buzzed like bees;
But he jumped for me, and shouldered me,
Though a shot brought him once to his knees;
But he staggered up, and packed me off,
With a dozen stumbles and falls,
Till safe in our lines he drapped us both,
His black hide riddled with balls.

So, my gentle gazelles, thar's my answer,
And here stays Banty Tim:
He trumped Death's ace for me that day
And I'm not goin' back on him!
You may rezoloot till the cows come home,
But ef one of you tetches the boy,
He'll wrastle his hash to-night in hell,
Or my name's not Tilmon Joy!

Little Breeches

I DON'T go much on religion,
 I never ain't had no show;
 But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
 On the handful o' things I know.
 I don't pan out on the prophets
 And free-will, and that sort of thing,—
 But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
 Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
 And my little Gabe come along,—
 No four-year-old in the county
 Could beat him for pretty and strong,
 Peart and chipper and sassy,
 Always ready to swear and fight,—
 And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
 Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
 As I passed by Taggart's store;
 I went in for a jug of molasses
 And left the team at the door.
 They scared at something and started,—
 I heard one little squall,
 And hell-to-split over the prairie
 Went team, Little Breeches and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!
 I was almost froze with skeer;
 But we roused up some torches,
 And sarched for 'em far and near.
 At last we struck hosses and wagon,
 Snowed under a soft white mound,
 Upsot, dead beat,—but of little Gabe
 No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,
 Of my fellow-critter's aid,—
 I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
 Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

.
 By this, the torches was played out,

And me and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see.
“I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that’s what’s the matter of me.”

How did he git thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm.
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child,
And foteching him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around The Throne.

The Mystery of Gilgal

THE darkest, strangest mystery
I ever read, or heern, or see,
Is 'long of a drink at Taggart's Hall,—
Tom Taggart's of Gilgal.

I've heern the tale a thousand ways,
But never could git through the maze
That hangs around that queer day's doin's:
But I'll tell the yarn to youans.

Tom Taggart stood behind his bar,
The time was fall, the skies was fa'r,
The neighbors round the counter drewd,
And ca'mly drinked and jawed.

At last come Colonel Blood of Pike,
And old Jedge Phinn, permiscus-like,
And each, as he meandered in,
Remarked, "A whisky-skin."

Tom mixed the beverage full and fa'r,
And slammed it, smoking, on the bar.
Some says three fingers, some says two,—
I'll leave the choice to you.

Phinn to the drink put forth his hand;
Blood drewd his knife, with accent bland,
"I ax yer parding, Mister Phinn—
Jest drap that whisky-skin."

No man high-toneder could be found
Than old Jedge Phinn the country round.
Says he, "Young man, the tribe of Phinns
Knows their own whisky-skins!"

He went for his 'leven-inch bowie-knife:—
"I tries to foller a Christian life;
But I'll drap a slice of liver or two,
My bloomin' shrub, with you."

They carved in a way that all admired,
Tell Blood drewd iron at last, and fired.

It took Seth Bludso 'twixt the eyes,
Which caused him great surprise.

Then coats went off, and all went in;
Shots and bad language swelled the din;
The short, sharp bark of Derringers,
Like bull-pups, cheered the furse.

They piled the stiff's outside the door;
They made, I reckon, a cord or more.
Girls went that winter, as a rule,
Alone to spellin'-school.

I've sarched in vain, from Dan to Beer-
Sheba, to make this mystery clear;
But I end with *hit* as I did begin,—
“WHO GOT THE WHISKY-SKIN?”

Golyer

Ef the way a man lights out of this world
Helps fix his heft for the other sp'ere,
I reckon my old friend Golyer's Ben
Will lay over lots of likelier men
For one thing he done down here.

You did n't know Ben? He driv a stage
On the line they called the Old Sou'-west;
He wa'n't the best man that ever you seen,
And he wa'n't so ungodly pizen mean,—
No better nor worse than the rest.

He was hard on women and rough on his friends;
And he did n't have many, I'll let you know;
He hated a dog and disgusted a cat,
But he'd run off his legs for a motherless brat,
And I guess there's many jess so.

I've seed my sheer of the run of things,
I've hoofed it a many and many a miled,
But I never seed nothing that could or can
Jest git all the good from the heart of a man
Like the hands of a little child.

Well! this young one I started to tell you about,—
His folks was all dead, I was fetchin' him
through,—
He was just at the age that's loudest for boys,
And he blowed such a horn with his sarchin' small
voice,
We called him "the Little Boy Blue."

He ketched a sight of Ben on the box,
And you bet he bawled and kicked and howled,
For to git 'long of Ben, and ride thar too;
I tried to tell him it would n't do,
When suddingly Golyer growled,

"What's the use of making the young one cry?
Say, what's the use of being a fool?
Sling the little one up here whar he can see,
He won't git the snuffles a-ridin' with me,—

The night ain't any too cool."

The child hushed cryin' the minute he spoke:
 "Come up here, Major! don't let him slip."
 And jest as nice as a woman could do,
 He wropped his blanket around them two,
 And was off in the crack of a whip.

We rattled along an hour or so,
 Till we heerd a yell on the still night air.
 Did you ever hear an Apache yell?
 Well, ye need n't want to, *this* side of hell:
 There's nothing more devilish there.

Caught in the shower of lead and flint
 We felt the old stage stagger and plunge;
 Then we heerd the voice and the whip of Ben,
 As he gethered his critters up again,
 And tore away with a lunge.

The passengers laughed, "Old Ben's all right,
 He's druv five year and never was struck."
 "Now if I'd been thar, as sure as you live,
 They'd 'a' plugged me with holes as thick as
 a sieve:
 It's the reg'lar Golyer luck."

Over hill and holler and ford and creek
 Jest like the hosses had wings, we tore;
 We got to Looney's, and Ben come in
 And laid down the baby and axed for his
 gin,
 And dropped in a heap on the floor.

Said he, "When they fired, I kivered the
 kid,—
 Although I ain't pretty, I'm middlin' broad;
 And look! he ain't fazed by arrow nor ball,—
 Thank God! my own carcase stopped them all."
 Then we seen his eye glaze, and his lower jaw
 fall,—
 And he carried his thanks to God.

The Pledge at Spunky Point

A TALE OF EARNEST EFFORT AND HUMAN PERFDY

IT'S all very well for preachin',
But preachin' and practice don't gee;
I've give the thing a fair trial,
And you can't ring it in on me.
So toddle along with your pledge, Squire,
Ef that's what you want me to sign;
Betwixt me and you, I've been thar,
And I'll not take any in mine.

A year ago last Fo'th July
A lot of the boys was here.
We all got corned and signed the pledge
For to drink no more that year.
There was Tilmon Joy and Sheriff McPhail
And me and Abner Fry,
And Shelby's boy Leviticus
And the Golyers, Luke and Cy.

And we anteed up a hundred
In the hands of Deacon Kedge
For to be divided the follerin' Fo'th
'Mongst the boys that kep' the pledge.
And we knowed each other so well, Squire,
You may take my scalp for a fool,
Ef every man when he signed his name
Did n't feel cock-sure of the pool.

Fur a while it all went lovely;
We put up a job next day
Fur to make Joy b'lieve his wife was dead,
And he went home middlin' gay;
Then Abner Fry he killed a man,
And afore he was hung McPhail
Jest bilked the widder ouden her sheer
By getting him slewed in jail.

But Chris'mas scooped the Sheriff,
The egg-nogs gethered him in;
And Shelby's boy Leviticus
Was, New Year's, tight as sin;

And along in March the Golyers
Got so drunk that a fresh-biled owl
Would 'a' looked, 'long-side o' them two young men,
Like a sober temperance fowl.

Four months alone I walked the chalk,
I thought my heart would break;
And all them boys a-slappin' my back
And axin', "'What'll you take?'"
I never slep' without dreamin' dreams
Of Burbin, Peach, or Rye,
But I chawed at my niggerhead and swore
I'd rake that pool or die.

At last—the Fo'th—I thumped myself
Through chores and breakfast soon,
Then scooted down to Taggarts' store—
For the pledge was off at noon;
And all the boys was gethered thar,
And each man hilt his glass—
Watchin' me and the clock quite solemn-like
Fur to see the last minute pass.

The clock struck twelve! I raised the jug
And took one lovin' pull—
I was holler clar from skull to boots,
It seemed I could n't git full.
But I was roused by a fiendish laugh
That might have raised the dead—
Them ornary sneaks had sot the clock
A half an hour ahead!

"'All right!'" I squawked. "'You've got me,
Jest order your drinks agin,
And we'll paddle up to the Deacon's
And scoop the ante in.'"
But when we got to Kedge's,
What a sight was that we saw!
The Deacon and Parson Skeeters
In the tail of a game of Draw.

They had shook 'em the heft of the mornin',
The Parson's luck was fa'r,
And he raked, the minute we got thar,

The last of our pool on a pa'r,
So toddle along with your pledge, Squire,
I 'low it's all very fine,
But ez fur myself, I thank ye,
I'll not take any in mine.

Benoni Dunn

I SAT on a worm fence talking
With one of the Bear Creek boys,
When all the woods were ringing
With the blue jay's jubilant noise,
Prairie and timber were glorious
In the love of the hot young sun,
But a philosophic gloom possessed
The soul of Benoni Dunn.

"Nothin' in all this 'varsal yerth
Is like what it ort to be,
I've give up tryin' to see the nub—
It's too hefty a job fer me.
The weaker a feller's stummick may be,
The bigger his dinner, you bet,
And the more he don't care a damn for cash,
The richer he's sure to get!

"Thar's old Brads—got a pretty young wife
And the biggest house in Pike—
No chick nor child—says he's sixty-two,
But he's eighty-two more like.
I 'low God thinks it a derned good joke—
The way he tries it on—
To send a plenty of hazel-nuts
To folks with their back teeth gone.

"I ort to be in Congress;
I would ef I'd went to school.
Thar's Colonel Scrubb our member
He's jest a nateral fool.
When he come here, Lord! he did n't know
Peach blow from a dogwood blossom,
And the derned galoot owned up to me
That he never seed a 'possum!

"Everything works contrary—
You never knows what to do:
Ef I sow in wheat I'll wish it was corn
Afore the fall is through.
And talk about pleasure—ef I was axed
The thing that most I love,

I'd say it's gingerbread—and that
I git the littlest uv.

“What is the use of livin’
Where everything goes skew-haw,
Where you starve ef you keep the Commandments,
And hang ef you break the law,
I’ve give up tryin’ to see the nub
Uv what we was meant to be;
The more I study, the more I don’t know—
It’s too hefty a job fer me.”

And this was the sum of the thinking
Of tall Benoni Dunn,—
While gay in weeds his cornfield laughed
In the light of the kindly sun.
Ruminant thus he maundered,
With a scowl on his tangled brow,
With gaps in his fence, and hate in his heart,
And rust on his idle plough.

Appendix

This unfinished and untitled Golyer story survives in manuscript form, Brown University Libraries. It is published here for the first time with the consent of Brown University. The title, which appears within brackets, has been supplied editorially.

[*Gallagher, Spelled Golyer*]

There is a house in a Southern Capital looking on one of the prettiest squares in the world, where on almost any evening in the year, you will find a company of half a dozen men, & sometimes one or two women, setting before a fire which always glows and never smokes; I cannot say so much for the men, nor even for the women. There seems but one qualification required of the male visitors of this hospitable house, that they shall have something to say for themselves; and but one for the ladies, that they shall be good to look at. The purpose for which they gather there is not politics or, primarily, flirtation; which differentiates this house from others in the city; the business of the place and hour is conversation. On most evenings there is a brisk play of give and take; but sometimes, when the party is small and sympathetic, one guest may be drawn out to tell at considerable length of some passage in his life, while all the rest listen, or look at the glowing embers, in silence which amounts to the same thing as attention; but the evenings we most value and remember are those when the host, who usually passes the evening in blowing clouds of nicotine up the chimney, takes the conversation in hand and does the talking himself. There is one drawback to these apparently frank deliverances of his; he never talks about himself, but always of much less interesting people; nevertheless, there is a kind of documentary interest about his stories of the people he has met in the world's byways and some of them I have written out on returning home. This is one of them.

I have been thinking, he said—this remark was addressed to me—we were in *tout petit comité*—the hour was late and only two or three lingered about the fire—I have been thinking of the remark you made at dinner that there were only two careers in life in which success was certain—one, founding a new religion, and the other, getting into society. I have no experience in faith-founding, but, of course, after Joe Smith and Blavatzky, your remark is a truism, on that side of it. On the other I imagine it is equally true. We have all dined this week with people we swore last year we never would know. It is a stupid thing to say, "We must draw the line somewhere." Draw it where you please, it will no more stop travel than the meridian of Greenwich. The people who make up their minds to know you, will do it, if you are worth their while, or if they think you are—which amounts to the same."

“But”—a smoker interrupted—“it certainly requires some means—some resources of purse, or brains or manners, to get and hold a place in society.”

“It requires nothing,” replied the Host “except a cheek of bronze, and the heart of a Snob. If you are ready to face any amount of snubbing, and if you honestly love and worship rank and fashion with your whole heart, you will succeed, in spite of “the twin jailors of the daring heart, low birth and iron fortune.” Of course it is far easier to take your seat among the Smart if you have a lot of money. With a good house, good wine, good horses, any place you want is at your disposition. The horse is the first title of nobility. The big house is of itself the seat of a Family. The full purse made originally all the Princes that now swagger in Italian cities. But when you have these, there is no merit in being fashionable. You *buy* your box ticket which gives you the run of the place—you don’t earn it. But I have several cases in mind where I have seen the most unpromising circumstances lead to brilliant success—if you call it success to come to know people of rank and title.

“I read the other day in a newspaper of the death of a man in Syracuse, who in his chosen walk of life was as successful as Gladstone or Vanderbilt in theirs. I lived in Syracuse when I was a boy. We used to get our horses and buggies of an old fellow named Gallagher. He spelled his patronymic Golyer because he said it was pronounced so and it saved time and trouble. He had a shockheaded boy who helped him about the stable, held our horses when we started and took the reins when we returned. He was a serviceable well-meaning chap, and deserved the quarters the boys used to toss him after a buggy drive or sleigh-ride. His only fault was that he was not always on hand when he was wanted. But his father knew his habits; and a loud malediction sometimes accompanied in its flight by a brickbat would generally fetch young Golyer out from some shady corner of the stable yard. He would come not very briskly up with a crumpled story-paper in his hand and a look as of another world in his pale blue eyes. “There! jest look at that Image!” old Golyer would say. “A musin’ and a blinkin’ like an everlastin’ bat! Well, Mark, how is Lord Alphonsus and Lady Victoriana Jane a gettin’ along by this time?”

These allusions to Quintillian’s literary tastes would always bring the brick dust color to the youth’s cheeks, but he would make no reply. There was no special malice in the old man’s allusions. He was himself rather proud of his son’s liking for what he considered genteel literature.

He was so quick to act on a hint that at last I became shy of giving them to him. One day he spoke in my presence disrespectfully of a friend of mine who had a papal title of nobility. “He calls himself Duke of Cluny just as if he was a real Duke like Launes or Bassano?”

“Beware, Golyer, how you make such distinctions,” I answered. “Do you call a Corsican adventurer a greater authority than the Pope? Those titles you speak of so slightly are derived from a Power only one remove from the Great White Throne.”

I said this with a perfectly straight face and he almost trembled as he listened. “Well, by Jackson,” he said, in an awe stricken voice, “I never thought of that.”

